Sage Valmiki's

ADBHUT RAMAYAN

(Original Text with complete English Rendering, Explanatory Notes & Appendices)



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Dedication

A humble word from author

No creature is perfect; its foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly— he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent— it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be his very own is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the Lord's holy feet, and finding no words to express my gratitude to him, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

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PREFACE

रामायणमितिख्यातं शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम् । (सर्ग १, श्लोक २½)
पञ्चविंशतिसाहस्त्रं रामायणमिदं भुविः ।। (सर्ग १, श्लोक ४)
किं गीतमिह मुष्णाति तन्मे कथय सुव्रत । (सर्ग १, श्लोक ५½)

Sage Bharadwaj asked seer Valmiki, 'Ramayan is said to be spread in hundreds of thousands of verses. Out of them, twenty five thousand versions are available here on this earth. Out of these, please be kind to tell me that story which is most secret, magnificent, mysterious and hitherto undisclosed and unknown in this world' (canto 1, verse nos. 2½, 4, 5½).

शृणुष्वावाहितोब्रह्मन्! काकुत्स्थचरितं महत् ।
सीताया मूलभूतायाः प्रकृतेश्चरितञ्च यत् ।। (सर्ग १, श्लोक ११)

Valmiki replied, inter alia, 'Oh Brahmin! Listen carefully to the great and glorious story related to the worldly deeds done by the heir of the Kakutstha clan (i.e., Sri Ram) in which the stupendously glorious and fascinating deeds done by Sita, who was a gross manifestation of the subtle primary, eclectic, ethereal energy and sublime force of creation, which are robust, vigorous and effective and called Mother Nature or 'Prakriti', assumes a preeminent role' (canto 1, verse no. 11).

'**Adbhut Ramayan'**, as the name suggests, describes the most wonderful, mysterious and fascinating story of Ramayan, the chronology of the worldly deeds done by Sri Ram and Sita, who were manifestations of Lord Vishnu and his divine consort Goddess Laxmi respectively on the earth to get rid of evil forces personified by the demons, which was hitherto unknown in this world. It is a strange and mysterious story, quite different from the general perception about the story of Ramayan in which Sri Ram is the main hero and he occupies the central stage throughout the epic. This is the story where Sita, who was not only the manifestation of Goddess Laxmi and a divine consort of Sri Ram but also of the primary forces of and energy responsible for creation, collectively called 'Prakriti' (Nature) and 'Maya' (deluding powers of Nature),

plays a prominent role. The story revolves around Sita more than it does around Sri Ram, and it seeks to establish the greatness, the valour and courage, the strength, powers and potentials, the glory and majesty of women and womanhood which are traditionally so much adored, admired, honoured and praised in India more than men and manhood. It is the 'mother' who really takes care of the world created by the father; it is Sita who provided succour and restored peace in the world when she finally killed the thousand headed Ravana of Pushkar, who was the elder brother of the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka and equal number of times more powerful than his younger sibling, even though Sri Ram failed to subdue and vanquish him. It was Sita who finally overcame this great demon, restored peace on this earth by eliminating the scourage of all evil mongering demons representing vices and perversions on this earth. It was she who forcefully restored the balance in favour of righteousness and auspiciousness by eliminating all inimical forces that came in the way of righteousness and virtuousness.

The story unfolds in 27 Cantos, and is an unconventional depiction of the epic story of Ramayan in various aspects. For one, it does not have the standard pattern of 7 'Kandas' or Chapters of the conventional Ramayan (which are Baal Kand, Ayodhya Kand, Aranya Kand, Kishkindha Kand, Sundar Kand, Lanka Kand and Uttar Kand). Rather, it is divided into 27 Cantos forming one homogenous text. Second, the reason why sage Narad cursed Vishnu has been elaborately dealt with, as is the story of king Ambrish who was one of the ancestors of Lord Ram (Canto 1-4). Third, Sita's birth has been described in great detail and it establishes, most unconventionally again, that she was an immaculate conception of Mandodari, the wife of 10-headed Ravana. This particular episode of Sita's strange birth gives a real mysterious twist to the generally held view about the birth and parentage of Sita, but a careful reading will dispel all doubts of any wrong doing or occurrence of any unrighteousness pertaining to her birth (canto 8). Earlier, the story describes why and how sage Narad had cursed Laxmi to force her to take birth as Sita and become the daughter of Mandodari, the wife of the 10-headed Ravana (canto 5-7).

Next we find that the author of the epic, sage Valmiki, has skipped all other events related to Sri Ram's childhood, his going with sage Vishwamitra to protect his fire sacrifice, and the marriage of Sri Ram and his brothers with Sita and her sisters at Janakpur. Our story of 'Adbhut Ramayan' comes straight down to sage Parashuram coming angrily for a stand off with Sri Ram when the former learnt about the breaking of Lord Shiva's bow, called 'Pinak', by Sri Ram, and which was a condition set by Sita's worldly father Janak for her marriage. He met the marriage party while it was on its way back to Ayodhya with the brides. Sri Ram confronted the sage boldly, vanquished his haughtiness and his sense of superiority as a vanquisher of the Kshatriya clan (verse nos. 10-16); Sri Ram then showed the sage his 'Viraat form' which was the macrocosmic, all encompassing divine and colossus form of the supreme Lord of the cosmos (in verse nos. 17-20½). The sage's 'Tej' (the divine energy, strength, powers and potentials which he possessed), which was given to him earlier by Lord Vishnu, was snatched by the Lord, and the crest fallen sage was advised by him to go and do severe penances and austerities to recover them. All this is covered in canto no. 9.

Moving ahead with the story, we find that once again the narration jumps straight to Sri Ram meeting Hanuman and showing him his 4- armed vision of Vishnu in canto 10. This, in conjunction with the Viraat form shown to Parashuram in Canto 9, completes the depiction of Sri Ram's true divine form as the supreme Lord of creation. Then the discourse between Sri Ram and Hanuman follows, which expounds on the philosophy postulated and propounded by Vedanta relating to the Atma/soul, Brahm, the elements called 'Bhuts', the creatures, their interrelationship with each other, the concept of 'Moksha' (liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation etc.) in canto nos. 11, 12 and 14. The concept of 'Bhakti' (devotion, faith, reverence, allegiance, submission and surrender to the supreme Lord by his devotee) is also elucidated in detail in canto no. 13. These four cantos (nos. 11-14) have a high element of spiritual quotient and contain almost all the principle tenets of the Upanishads presented in a succinct manner.

Realising the true form of Sri Ram as the supreme Lord

personified and manifested as a human, Hanuman praises him and prays to him in canto 15.

The entire episode of Sri Ram crossing the ocean, defeating and slaying the 10-headed Ravana at Lanka and coming back to Ayodhya to be crowned king have been summed up in merely 20 verses of canto 16 to emphasise the point that the main thrust of this 'Adbhut Ramayan' is not to repeat what is the already known story of Sri Ram, a story which highlights and glorifies Sri Ram's victory over the king of Lanka, but to emphasise the point that something more formidable was still to be achieved by the divine couple. A greater, many times more powerful and invincible enemy in the form of the thousand headed Ravana of Pushkar still existed, and unless he was vanquished, the real glory of the divine couple Sri Ram and Sita would not have reached its pinnacle.

So we move on to the second half of the story. The real story of Adbhut Ramayan starts from canto 17 when Sita informs the royal court of Sri Ram, attended by great sages and seers who had assembled there to congratulate and honour Sri Ram for his victory over the Ravana of Lanka, about the existence of a superior enemy in the form of a thousand headed Ravana who ruled at Pushkar, and who was the elder brother of the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka. She tells the assembly how she had come to know about him. This inspired Sri Ram to launch a campaign against this formidable enemy. Canto 18-22 describe the ferocious, no-holds-barred war between the two, Sri Ram and the thousand headed Ravana of Pushkar, which ultimately lead to Sri Ram being defeated and gravely wounded and lying unconscious in the battlefield in canto 22, verse nos. 48-50.

There was a terrible cry of distress, grief and dismay amongst the Gods who panicked when Sri Ram fell. At their urgent appeal, Sita assumed the most terrible and horrifying form of 'Mahakali', the great black goddess of death and destruction. Canto no. 23 describes her killing of this formidable and ferocious demon, along with his sons and army, single handedly. At that time, the Goddess Mahakali had danced the ferocious and most terrifying 'dance of death' which sent chill down the spine of all the Gods as

well as the sages and seers who feared that the creation would be annihilated by her wrath. The eerie description of the battlefield is really spine and bone chilling, and it vividly describes a scenario that is reflective of the view of the landscape, the horrendous occurrences, the horrifying, blood cuddling bloodshed and mayhem that occurs during an annihilating war of destruction and death. This canto describes how the divine cosmic force of nature was unleashed by the Lord when all other more conventional means of eliminating evil, pervert and sinful forces from this earth proved futile. When conventional steps were not sufficient, drastic measures were taken by Mother Nature

In order to calm Sita down, now in her fierce, vicious and relentless form as Mahakali, the Gods, lead by Brahma who is the patriarch of creation, prayed to her most humbly and assured her that Sri Ram would soon come back to life and regain his consciousness. This is described in canto no. 24.

When Sri Ram finally regained his consciousness, he was stunned to see the terrifying form of Mahakali and was terrified on observing the haunting scene of death and destruction lying strewn all around him. When asked who she was, Sita, as Mahakali, described and showed to Sri Ram her true form, which was the stupendous, glorious, majestic and colossus form of the cosmic Goddess who is the 'boss' of all that exists, in canto 25, verse no. 5-14½. This held Sri Ram awed and spellbound. Then follows the marvelous and fascinating Stotras or hymns in the praise of the Goddess. Sri Ram prayed to her, brimming over with devotion and reverence, with these Stotras and he worshipped the great Goddess in her majestic, macrocosmic, divine, sublime and subtle manifestation as the Goddess of the universe. These hymns essentially take the form of '1008 names' of the Goddess which are the different adjectives or epithets or metaphors used to describe the different virtues, glories and attributes of the cosmic Shakti which has manifested itself in the form of Mahakali in the battlefield of Pushkar. She is the stupendous force and energy primarily responsible for creating, unfolding, sustaining, enhancing, developing, regulating and finally concluding the entire creation, the forces which

are so stupendous, so powerful and potent that they accomplished what Sri Ram, who was himself an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and who was a manifestation of the Viraat Purush, could not do himself with all the strength, powers, potentials and authority that he had at his command. All the unaccomplished task of getting rid of evil forces from this earth which Sri Ram could not do himself were done by Sita in her manifestation as Mahakali. What Sri Ram could not do after fighting fiercely with the thousand headed Ravana for a longtime, was done by Sita, as Mahakali, within a short span of time.

In fact, the entire canto no. 25 is dedicated to these magnificent hymns called Stotras, and is unique in the sense that it is the only text which sings the glories of the great goddess, the mother of creation, the female aspect of creation, using a wide swathe of metaphysical concepts extending from the gross to the most subtlest. I have tried to explain all these 1008 words with their simple meaning and implication to add beauty, succulence, life and vibrancy to this epic story of Adbhut Ramayan.

This pure metaphysical form of worship is followed by a spiritual and devotional form of prayer in canto no. 26. These two cantos (no. 25 and 26), read with cantos 9 to 14, mark the pinnacle of the spiritual glory of this Adbhut Ramayan.

Pleased by Sri Ram's prayer, Goddess Mahakali sheds her horrifying and terrible form, and she calms down to her original form of the pleasant looking, benevolent, charming, docile, gentle and sweet form of Sita. The Gods celebrated the occasion by beating kettledrums and showering flower as Sri Ram and Sita prepared to come back to Ayodhya from Pushkar after vanquishing and slaying the thousand headed Ravana, thereby removing the last hurdle to world peace.

The final canto no. 27 describes Sri Ram's arrival at Ayodhya and his bidding good bye to the monkeys and demons (the companions of Sugriv and Vibhishan respectively who had earlier been invited to join the campaign against the thousand headed Ravana). Sage Valmiki concludes the narration by describing the genesis of this special version of Sri Ram's story (verse no. 19-22) and lists the benefits of hearing and reading it

(verse no. 14-18, 31-32).

A summary of the whole story is also included by Valmiki himself at the end of canto no. 27, in verse no. 23-30, as an epilogue.

In this last canto no. 27, Valmiki gives the reason why he has skipped so many important and well known episodes in the life story of Sri Ram and has instead mentioned only selected episodes which were hitherto unknown to the people. The sage says himself— **एतत्ते कथितं भद्रे भारद्वाज महामते । तेषु किंचिदिहाश्चर्यमुक्तं रामकथाश्रयम् ।। सर्वं न वक्तुमिच्छामि पुरुक्तिभयाद्द्विज । (सर्ग २७, श्लोक १०½–११½)**. That is, 'Oh gentleman and wise Bharadwaj! I have told you all for your sake. Sri Ram's stories are innumerable. Out of them I have described only a few strange and mysterious, most amazing and astounding events (which were hitherto unknown to you). It is not possible to describe all of them, or I wished to avoid the rest for fear of repetition' (canto 27, verse no. 10½-11½). Indeed, Valmiki's other well known and more popular version of the great epic story of Sri Ram's life is simply known as 'Ramayan' without the prefix 'Adbhut' attached to it. That Ramayan was almost a historical rendering of the events as they occurred, because Valmiki was a contemporary sage of Sri Ram even as Veda Vyas, who was a contemporary of Lord Krishna, had described the epic war known as Mahabharat in his voluminous Bhagwat Mahapuran. But Valmiki had a pang of discomfort gnawing away at his heart. He was not satisfied with what he wrote in his epic 'Ramayan'. Though it was a truthful narration of the story, but in it he had treated Sri Ram as a noble and great emperor, most virtuous, righteous, strong and powerful. But that story lacked the metaphysical import and prowess shown by Veda Vyas when he described Krishna's 'Viraat form' which he had shown to Arjun when he was reluctant to enter war at the beginning of the Mahabharat battle, or when he penned his great epic 'Adhyatma Ramayan' (an English version of which has been published separately by this author). Further, Sita, or for that matter a woman and womanhood, was depicted in a negative frame as being at the receiving end of male dominance in Indian society— she was the one who always suffered, and she was destined to her cruel destiny

without the chance, authority and powers to resist. Perhaps, while describing Sita's torments at Lanka where she was in the captivity of the 10-headed Ravana and her anguish at her second separation from Sri Ram when she was exiled to sage Valmiki's hermitage where her two sons Luv and Kush were born, inspired and compelled Valmiki to set the record straight by showing that Sita was far superior in courage, boldness, fortitude, strength, valour, potent and prowess than what she had been traditionally depicted to be. She epitomizes power and bravery, courage and gall. This is very evident when she admonishes and chastens the sages while they were eulogising Sri Ram's victory over the 10-headed Ravana. She said, 'Whatever the sages have said in praise of Sri Ram is ridiculous and uncalled for. It smacks of sycophancy. The slaying of the 10-headed Ravana is not worthy of the praise that is being lavished upon Sri Ram' (canto 17, verse 18, 19½). 'When he (Sri Ram) kills the thousand faced Ravana, then only will his mettle, fame and glory spread, and the world will feel healthy, comfortable and reassured of peace and tranquility' (canto 18, verse no. 5-6).

We learn that Sri Ram proved indeed very incompetent in front of this senior Ravana, and he was made to bite the dust of the battlefield at Pushkar, as is evident in canto 22, verse nos. 48-50. Then Valmiki was in his true elements when he described how Sita assumed the most formidable form of the great goddess of death and destruction, known as Mahakali, killed the enemy in a short time and was honoured and praised by Sri Ram himself when he was shown her eclectic, colossus, magnificent, majestic and divine form. He fervently prayed to her in great humility, singing hymns that are considered the best piece of devotional Stotras or hymns offered to honour the 'Shakti' or energy, power, strength and vitality aspect of Mother Nature herself, as is clear in canto 25, verse no. 16 till canto 26, verse no. 37.

This Adbhut Ramayan is also called **'Adbhuttotar Kandam'** (अद्भुत्तरकाण्डम) as is clear from canto 27, verse no. 19. This means that this story is the most excellent, the most amazing, the most mysterious narration of the deeds done by Sri Ram and Sita which are very fascinating and strange as well as extremely

marvelous and magnificent in their reach and import.

The 'mystery' aspect and the 'secrecy' of the episodes narrated in this Adbhut Ramayan called 'the Adbhuttotar Kandam' had been maintained all along till they were narrated and made public by sage Valmiki to sage Bharadwaj, for the simple reason that when Mahakali assumed the fierce form of the naked Goddess of death and destruction to kill Ravana, none of the members of Sri Ram's army was present there on the battlefield at the time, and even he, Sri Ram, lay unconscious. So, though Sri Ram narrated the events when he came back to Ayodhya to his friends as described in canto 27, verse no. 4, he could not describe to them the exact sequence of events which unfolded on the battlefield after he had lost consciousness and before he regained it. The actual killing of Ravana by Sita in the form of Mahakali and her subsequent naked dance of death and annihilation on the battlefield, accompanied by innumerable other evil spirits of war also dancing with her in their naked and ferocious forms, was not known to Sri Ram; he was honestly unaware of them. None of the humans, monkeys and demons who had accompanied Sri Ram on the campaign were there to see those events either. They could not imagine how Sita had assumed the horrifying form of Mahakali playing around with severed skulls as if they were balls, romping and stomping around with blood soaked naked black body, covered with garlands of skulls, blood dripping all over, holding a wildly swaying sword drenched and dripping with blood, with ferociously burning eyes spouting vehement anger and wrath, with blood dripping from her protruded tongue like flames of fire giving out sparkles from the midst of blood-drenched sharp fang-like teeth, howling and prancing, yelling and screeching madly and frantically in the battlefield over corpses, tearing at some of them with her bare incisors and clawing at others with sharp pointed nails!

Further, the way Sri Ram prayed submissively to the Goddess after he had regained consciousness after his humiliating defeat at the hands of the thousand headed Ravana, would not have gone down well with his subjects. They adored Sri Ram as their great King Emperor who was very powerful and invincible, courageous and bold. Just imagine what they would have thought

had they known that the Lord whom they adored and lauded so much had been made to bite the dust of the battlefield when faced by a strong enemy. This made the story most unacceptable and unconventional for the mass's general consumption. All these events as narrated in this epic 'Adbhut Ramayan' had been omitted by Valmiki in his other epic story of Sri Ram, the well known 'Ramayan', because it would not have done well to the glory of the emperor that Sri Ram was and his followers would have lost their confidence in him. So he (Valmiki) decided to keep it under wraps and keep quiet for the moment while he was writing the other epic Ramayan, but later on when Sri Ram's sojourn in this world had come to an end, the sage decided to reveal the hitherto hidden and unknown facts for the benefit of mankind to make the record straight. He decided to undo the injustice done to the depiction of the 'real story' by presenting this 'sequel to the epic Ramayan' in the form of this present book called 'Adbhut Ramayan' which essentially glorifies Sita instead of Sri Ram.

Another important point is that this Adbhut Ramayan focuses on Sri Ram and Sita alone, bypassing all other characters associated with Ramayan, relegating them to the background, or not mentioning them altogether —such as the brothers of Sri Ram, the monkey king Sugriv and the demon king Vibhishan etc.. Even Hanuman, who is a great comrade-in-arm of Sri Ram in all other versions of Ramayan, has no role at all to play in the battle with the Ravana of Pushkar. Instead, the text lists the individual names of all the warriors and commanders of the army of the thousands headed Ravana as mentioned in canto 18, verse nos. 43-52, 59-70, as well as his sons as listed in canto 19, verse nos. 2-19, besides describing in detail their forms and demeanours in canto 18, verse no. 53-58 and canto 19, verse no. 10-33.

A general question that rises in the mind is why Sri Ram behaved like an ordinary human being if he was the supreme God? Valmiki has answered this question in canto 4, verse nos. 60-81. I have appended my own notes to the verses to amply clarify the points and leave no doubts in the mind.

Thus we see that 'Adbhut Ramayan' or the 'Adbhuttotar

Kandam' as it is named by Valmiki himself in canto 27, verse no. 19, is a most fascinating and marvelous but unconventional rendering of the great story of Sri Ram highlighting those events, those episodes which are mysterious and strange to hear, almost on the edge of incredulity. It was a closely guarded secret kept with Brahma, the creator and patriarch of creation, who first divulged it to Narad, the celestial sage, and from him sage Valmiki came to know about it; this is clearly mentioned in canto 27, verse no. 20. It was first described by Valmiki to Indra and then to Bharadwaj, the present listener of this beautiful story; this is mentioned in canto no. 27, verse no. 19.

Sri Ram's story is most charming and fascinating while being spiritually elevating at the same time. For this humble author, Sri Ram is his entire being, the purpose of existence, the means of existence and the end of existence. Even as a seed will sprout into a new flowering plant no matter which side of it is facing down or up, the contentment and peace, the happiness and joy, the sense of fulfillment and accomplishment derived from describing the Lord's story is indeed most uplifting and elevating for one's spirit.

I have introduced each canto with an outline synopsis of the main theme in it. The introductory synopsis will also help to link the particular canto with the general story of Ramayan, and prepare the reader to enjoy the text better.

It would be pertinent to learn about who the author of this epic story, sage Valmiki, was. So I have included an elaborate appendix no. 1 which would quite exhaustively present a comprehensive picture about this great and enlightened sage, a wise and erudite seer, an accomplished hermit and ascetic who was one of the greatest scholars that ever walked on this earth, i.e., the great sage Valmiki. Numerous fascinating facts about him have been presented with citations from the Vedas and Purans and other texts that not only tell us about his early life but also bring out the fact that he was a great narrator of the Purans and a classifier of the Vedas also. Incidentally, appendix no. 2 has a fascinating 'Sukta' from Rig Veda supposed to have been written by sage Valmiki in his incarnation as the 24th Veda Vyas. I hope that these two

appendices would be very informative for the reader.

I most sincerely, honestly and from the deepest recesses of my heart thank **Sri Navneet Das ji and Sri Neeraj Gupta** of Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan, K37/117, Gopal Mandir Lane, Varanasi, Phone : (0542) 2335263 for holding this torch illuminating the divine glories of Sri Ram as sung by the great and enlightened sage, the wise and erudite seer Valmiki, by publishing this great epic known as **'Adbhut Ramayan'**. Not everyone gets a chance to serve the Lord. The Lord picks and chooses them carefully, and like the apostles of Jesus Christ, they who are selected by Him to render service to Him are indeed most fortunate and privileged. Indeed, therefore, Sri Neeraj Gupta ji deserves a standing ovation for being selected by the Lord for this great honour. Mere thanks on my part will be insufficient to express my deep sense of gratitude to him to get this book published.

In fact, this narration has been inspired by the Lord himself, my fingers being only instrumental in holding the pen as it flowed on the paper. Therefore, all the credit goes to Sri Ram while I might be forgiven for the errors of omission and commission, of transgression and impertinence, as I am an ordinary human being with a bag full of my limitations and incompetencies. The credit also goes to Hanuman whom I revere as my moral preceptor and protector without whose support any work relating to Sri Ram remains unsuccessful and unaccomplished. And, finally the credit goes to Sri Neeraj Gupta ji of Chaukhambha Publishing House, New Delhi for enabling this flower to blossom in the form of a book.

I hope the reader will enjoy the text inspite of my shortcomings and would marvel at the greatness of this story and the fascinating mystery of the revealed tale aptly titled 'Adbhut Ramayan' or 'Adbhuttotar Kandam'.

Ram Navami 2009

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Canto 1
Prologue
Declaration of Divinity of Sri Ram & Sita

Sage Bharadwaj approached the great sage Valmiki, who was the senior most, scholarly and the wisest amongst those sages who stayed on the banks of river Tamsa, and asked him to narrate the story of Sir Ram, called Ramayan, with emphasis on its secret and mysterious aspects which were hitherto undisclosed and unknown. Thus unfolded this great and fascinating 'Adbhut Ramayan' which highlights the stupendous, but yet kept in wraps, deeds of Sita, the divine consort of Sri Ram. In this canto, her divinity as well as that of Sri Ram are being enumerated, and then their non- dual essential nature is proclaimed. This canto is like a prologue, an introduction to the whole story that follows this canto.

तमसातीरनिलयं निलयं तपसां गुरुम्।
वचसां प्रथमं स्थानं वाल्मीकिं मुनिपुङ्गवम् ।।१।।
विनयावनतोभूत्वा भारद्वाजोमहामुनिः।
अपृच्छत्सम्मतः शिष्यः कृताञ्जलिपुटो वशी ।।२।।

The most exalted sage Valmiki lived near the banks of river Tamsa. He was the senior most amongst the sages and seers living there. Hence, he was their teacher and preceptor. The faculty of speech (and its patron Goddess, Saraswati) symbolically had an exalted seat in his mouth (i.e., he was a fine speaker, an expert orator, well versed with the intricacies of language, and had mastery over grammar) (1).

The great sage named Bharadwaj presented himself before him with joined hands as a gesture of humility and submission, to show respect to the great sage like a disciple does before his moral preceptor and teacher, called a Guru. [That is, Bharadwaj, who was a great sage himself, approached Valmiki, who was senior to him, with joined hands, as if the former was the latter's disciple, in order to hear the divine story of Sri Ram from him.] He reverentially requested Valmiki— (2) [1-2].

रामायणमितिख्यातं शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम्।
प्रणीतं भवता यच्च ब्रह्मलोके प्रतिष्ठितम् ।।३।।
श्रूयते ब्रह्मणा नित्यमृषिभिः पितृभिः सुरैः ।
पञ्चविंशतिसाहस्रं रामायणमिदं भुविः ।।४।।
तदाकर्णि तमस्माभिः सविशेषं महामनुे ।४½।

'Ramayan is very famous and stupendously magnificent. It is spread across hundreds of thousands of verses[1]. It has been described and elucidated in great detail by you (or you have enunciated it and elaborately described it for the benefit of the people on earth). It is even established and famed in the Brahm Loka (the heaven) (3).

There (in the heaven), it is regularly heard most attentively and devotedly by Brahma (the creator), the holy celestial sages and seers, and the Gods and the spirits of ancestors (who reside in the heaven). Out of its countless variations, twenty thousand versions[2] are available here on earth, and oh great and exalted sage, we have heard them (4½) [3-4½].

[1]शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम्, [2]पञ्चविंशतिसाहस्रं

शतकोटिप्रविस्तारे रामायणमहार्णवे ।।५।।
किं गीतमिह मुष्णाति तन्मे कथय सुव्रत ।५½।

But, oh the righteous one[1], which of the episodes in the whole story, or which of the aspects of this vast repository of Sri Ram's divine story, extending to hundreds of thousands of verses, is secret, hitherto unknown, strange and mysterious[2]? Please do describe, or narrate them to us in detail' (5-5½).

[1]सुव्रत, [2]शतकोटिप्रविस्तारे

आकर्ण्यादरिणः पृष्ठं भारद्वाजस्य वै मुनिः ।।६।।
हस्तामलकवत्सर्वं सस्मार शतकोटिकम् ।
ओमित्युक्त्वा मुनिः शिष्यं प्रोवाच वदतां वरम् ।।७।।

Hearing this request or plea from Bharadwaj, the sage (Valmiki) recalled the entire Ramayan spread in hundreds of thousands of verses, about which he was well versed and expert, or which was well within the grasp of his knowledge and intellect and on which he was deemed to be the only authority existing at the time[1]. Saying 'so be it' to his disciple (sage Bharadwaj), he began in earnest his discourse or narration of those aspects of the great story of Sri

Ram's life, known as Ramayan, which were strange, mysterious and hitherto undisclosed and unknown (6-7).

[1]हस्तामलकवत्सर्वं

भारद्वाज! चिरञ्जीव साधु स्मारितमद्य नः ।७½।

'Oh Bharadwaj! Have a long and happy life. You have reminded me of an excellent topic or subject (and I am very glad and bless you for it) (7½).

शतकोटिप्रविस्तारे रामायणमहार्णवे ।।८।।
रामस्य चरितं सर्वमाश्चर्यं सम्यगीरितम् ।
पञ्चविंशतिसाहस्त्रं भूलोके यत् प्रतिष्ठितम् ।।९।।
नृणां हि सदृशं रामचरितं वर्णितं ततः ।
सीतामहात्म्यसारं यद्विशेषादत्र नोक्तवान् ।।१०।।

In the vast, fathomless and measureless ocean representing the story of Ramayan spreading for hundreds and thousands of units (verses) (8), the character and glory of Sri Ram stands out as being most astounding, astonishing, unparalled, marvelous, magnificent, stupendous, strange, mysterious and most fascinating[1]. In the 25,000 versions of Ramayan[2] established and prevalent in this world (earth) (9), Sri Ram's character and role has been narrated as if he was a human, albeit an exalted and noble one. But Sita's glories and greatness, her majestic divinity and stupendously marvelous authority, powers and prowess have been sidelined or not given its due importance and prominence[3] (10) [8-10].

[1]रामस्य चरितं सर्वमाश्चर्यं, [2]पञ्चविंशतिसाहस्त्रं, [3]सीतामहात्म्यसारं यद्विशेषादत्र नोक्तवान्

शृणुष्वावाहितोब्रह्मन्! काकुत्स्थचरितं महत् ।
सीताया मूलभूतायाः प्रकृतेश्चरितश्च यत् ।।११।।

Oh Brahmin (Bharadwaj)! Now listen carefully to the great and glorious story of the deeds done by the heir of the Kakutstha clan (Sri Ram)[1] in which the fascinating, stupendous and marvelous deeds done by Sita, who was a visible manifestation of the primary, subtle, ethereal and eclectic forces and sublime energy of creation which are robust, vigorous and effective, or Mother Nature (or Prakriti)[2] personified, occupy a prominent position (11).

[1]काकुत्स्थ, [2]सीताया मूलभूतायाः प्रकृते

[Note :- King Kakutstha was a valiant and brave king of the

solar dynasty. He was a forefather of Sri Ram, and his sons bear his name as the title of the family to which they belong.]

आश्चर्यमाश्चर्यमिदं गोपितं ब्रह्मणोगृहे ।
हिताय प्रियशिष्याय तुभ्यमावेदयामि तत् ।।१२।।

That secret which is most mysterious and strange but marvelous and fascinating[1] and was till now lying concealed amongst so many other secrets lying hidden in the divine abode of Brahma, the creator, I shall narrate it for the benefit of a favoured and loving disciple[2] like you (12).

[1]आश्चर्यमाश्चर्यमिदं गोपितं, [2]हिताय प्रियशिष्याय

जानकी प्रकृतिः सृष्टेरादिभूता महागुणा ।
तपःसिद्धि स्वर्गसिद्धिर्भूतिर्मूर्तिमतां सती ।।१३।।

Janki (Sita) is an image or personification of Prakriti (see verse no. 11 above)[1]. She is the primary primordial force present even before the creation of the basic Bhuts (elements) of life came into existence[2]. She is endowed with great, majestic, stupendous and wonderful virtues of powers, strength, potentials and prowess[3]. She is an embodiment of the rewards obtained by doing Tapa (severe austerities, penances and observing of strict religious vows)[4]. She embodies success in obtaining heaven (or an exalted stature, both in this world as well as in heaven)[5]. She is majesty, fame, glory, grandeur, renown, success, accomplishment, good fortunes and potentials personified, and she embodies all of all them in herself[6]. She is an embodiment and personification of such excellent virtues as chastity, loyalty, immaculacy, righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility and virtuousness[7] (13).

[1]जानकी प्रकृतिः, [2]सृष्टेरादिभूता, [3]महागुणा, [4]तपःसिद्धि, [5]स्वर्गसिद्धि, [6]र्भूतिर्मूर्तिमतां, [7]सती

विद्याविद्या च महती गीयते ब्रह्मवादिभिः ।
ऋषिः सिद्धिर्गुणमयी गुणातीता गुणात्मिका ।।१४।।

Those who are expert in the knowledge pertaining to the supreme, transcendental Brahm, actually sing her (Sita's) glories when they elucidate and expound about the concepts of Vidya and Avidya (i.e., what constitute the essential truth and absolute reality of this creation, and what constitute ignorance, illusions and delusion about this world which takes a creature away from this truth and reality)[1].

She is an embodiment of all successes, accomplishment and achievements as well as of the mystical powers, potentials, strengths and prowess, collectively called 'Siddhis'[2]. She possess all glories, fames, majesties, prosperities and good fortune, collectively known as 'Riddhis'[3]. She is not only an image of all these virtues and noble qualities called the different 'Gunas'[4], but she transcends them all (i.e., she is far superior to all of them taken together)[5]. She is like a benchmark or yardstick or criteria by which other virtues and qualities are measured or weighed against[6] (14).

[1]विद्याविद्या महती गीयते, [2]सिद्धि, [3]ऋद्धिः, [4]गुणमयी, [5]गुणातीता, [6]गुणात्मिका

ब्रह्मब्रह्माण्डसम्भूता सर्वकारणकारणम् ।
प्रकृतिर्विकृतिर्देवी चिन्मयी चिद्विलासिनी ।।१५।।

She is universally and uniformally present in both the Brahm (the unmanifest supreme authority of the creation from whom the rest of the creation has manifested) as well as the creation of that Brahm, the 'Brahmaand' (i.e., the entire manifested cosmos)[1]. She is at the root of all causes and reasons in the world[2]. She is the supreme patron Goddess of both Mother Nature known as 'Prakriti' as well as its opposite, the 'Vikriti' (i.e., she controls the good and righteous aspects of this creation, the good and virtuous temperaments, natures, habits, inclinations and tendencies of the creature, as well as the bad, evil, sinful and pervert ones respectively)[3]. She is enlightened, wise and intelligent as well as eternal, infinite and vast[4] (15).

[1]ब्रह्मब्रह्माण्डसम्भूता, [2]सर्वकारणकारणम्, [3]प्रकृतिर्विकृतिर्देवी, [4]चिन्मयी चिद्विलासिनी

महाकुण्डलिनी सर्पानुस्यूता ब्रह्मसंज्ञिता ।
यस्या विलसितं सर्वं जगदेतच्चराचरम् ।।१६।।

She is honoured with the metaphor of being stupendously great and most powerful 'Mahakundalini'[1] which is like a coiled serpent ready to unleash the creative potentials of the cosmic energy of creation present inherently in it[2]. 'Brahm' is an epithet used for her; or Brahm is a synonym for her[3]. [That is, Brahm and Sita are one and the same; they are a non-dual entity.] This whole animate as well as inanimate creation is nothing else but her maverick creation, created by her as a sport[4]. It is infused, imbued, imbrued, pervaded, completely soaked and drenched by her (i.e., she warps and wefts

through it; she pervades the entire creation both from the within as well as from the without); there is nothing that exists where she isn't present[5] (16).

[1]महाकुण्डलिनी, [2]सर्पानुस्यूता, [3]ब्रह्मसंज्ञिता, [4]जगदेतच्चराचरम्, [5]यस्या विलसितं सर्वं

[Note :- Kundalini is a term referring to the subtle energy centre present in the human body at the base of the spine. It is lying in a 8-coiled shape, much like a resting serpent. The Upanishads dealing with Yoga (meditation) describe in great detail about this Kundalini and how to unleash the vast reservoir of cosmic energy lying trapped and untapped in it. It is believed that Brahm-realisation is facilitated, and in fact made possible, by 'uncoiling' this Kundalini.]

यामाधाय हृदि ब्रह्मन्! योगिनस्तत्वदर्शिनः ।
विघट्टयन्ति हृद्ग्रन्थिं भवन्ति सुखमूर्त्तिकाः ।।१७।।

Oh Brahmin! Those Yogis (ascetics, sages, seers and hermits) who have a deep and penetrating insight into the knowledge about the essential truth and absolute reality about this creation, and who have succeeded in controlling their restless sense organs, meditate and contemplate upon her in their hearts. By this means, they are able to untie all the knots symbolising ignorance and delusions that have formed knarls around their hearts[1]. When these knots are untied or got rid off[2], they find peace, bliss and felicity; the became an image of these virtues[3] (17).

[1]हृद्ग्रन्थिं, [2]विघट्टयन्ति, [3]सुखमूर्त्तिकाः

यदा यदा हि धर्म्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति सुव्रत! ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदा प्रकृतिसम्भवः ।।१८।।

Oh the keeper of righteous vows[1]! Whenever righteousness, propriety, probity and virtuousness (collectively called 'Dharma') is on the decline, when those who follow Dharma are tormented and there is an upswing or upsurge of evil and sinful forces[2], the cosmic mother known as Nature or Prakriti[3] manifests herself to reverse this evil trend, and instead, she rejuvinates, enhances, redeems and reinstates those virtues which make a comeback in their original glorious and exalted form[4] (18).

[1]सुव्रत, [2]धर्म्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति, [3]प्रकृतिसम्भवः, [4]अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य

[Note :- Verse no. 13-18 proclaim the divinity of Sita.]

रामः साक्षात् परं ज्योतिःपरं धाम परः पुमान् ।
आकृतौ परमो भेदो न सीतारामयोर्यतः ।।१९।।

Sri Ram is a personification of the supreme, transcendental and divine 'light' of pure consciouness[1]. He is the truthful and the supreme abode where the soul of all the creatures find solace and succour as well as a final resting place[2]. He is none other than the supreme Lord manifested as a human (i.e., the unmanifest Lord Vishnu or Viraat Purush has revealed or manifested himself as Sri Ram)[3]. Though there appears to be differences in their physical, gross and visible forms (because Sri Ram is a male and Sita is a female)[4], but essentially there is absolutely no distinction, no duality whatsoever in the subtle, macrocosmic, supreme, divine and transcendental forms of Sri Ram and Sita (because both are synonymous with Brahm)[5] (19).

[1]साक्षात् परं ज्योतिः, [2]परं धाम, [3]परः पुमान्, [4]आकृतौ परमो भेदो न, [5]सीतारामयोर्यतः

रामः सीता जानकी रामभद्रो नाणुर्भेदो नैतयोरस्ति कश्चित् ।
सन्तो बुद्ध्वातत्त्वमेतद्विबुद्धाः पारं याताः संसृतेर्मृत्यु वक्त्रात् ।।२०।।

Ram, Sita, Janki and Ram Bhadra[1] —there is no distinction, even the minutest and most atomic or miniscule, between them whatsoever[2]. When a pious and devout holy man realises this essential fact, he attains enlightenment and becomes aware of the essential, irrefutable, unequivocal and immutable Truth which the absolute Reality[3]. The rewards of such wisdom and awareness is that such a person breaks free from the fear of death (because he has taken shelter with and obtained the protection of Sri Ram and Sita who are divine Beings and supreme Brahm manifested; because they are the supreme Lord of the creation)[4]. Such a person crosses the whirlpool of endless births and deaths[5] (20).

[1]रामः सीता जानकी रामभद्रो, [2]नाणुर्भेदो, [3]नैतयोरस्ति कश्चित् सन्तो, [4]बुद्ध्वातत्त्वमेतद्विबुद्धाः, [5]पारं याता संसृतेर्मृत्यु वक्त्रात्

[Note :- 'Sri Ram and Sita' stand for the vast, subtle, all-pervading, invisible, unmanifest and macrocosmic aspect of Brahm, whereas 'Janki', the daughter of Janak, and 'Ram Bhadra', the gentleman known as Sri Ram, are their manifested images in this mortal world. Janki and Ram

Bhadra are almost like humans, they suffer and even leave this world like humans, but Sri Ram and Sita are immortal and eclectic entities because they are other names by which Brahm is known. The placing of the 4 words— Ram, Sita, Janki and Ram Bhadra —is very significant here; the last two are a 'mirror image' of the first two. That is, 'Ram Bhadra' is a mirror image of 'Ram', while 'Janki' is a mirror image of 'Sita'. A mirror image is always illusionary, but it nevertheless 'reflects' something that actually exists, and it is a true copy of the original, for a mirror can only reflect the truth and not an illusion. So, though we cannot see the original form of Brahm, but by knowing Ram and Sita as Ram Bhadra and Janki respectively, we are able to grasp the reality and truthfulness of the divine Being.]

रामोऽचिन्त्यो नित्यचित्सर्वसाक्षी सर्वान्तः स्थः सर्वलोकैककर्त्ता ।
भर्त्ता हर्त्तानन्दमूर्त्तिर्विभूमा सीतायोगाच्चिन्त्यते योगिभिः सः ।।२१।।

Sri Ram is beyond the purview of mind and intellect[1]; he is eternal and immanent[2]; he is pure consciousness personified[3]; he is a witness to all (everything that is happening in this universe, all deeds and actions done and taken in this world are known to him)[4]; he is established in the bosom of all the creatures (as their Atma or soul)[5]; he is the creator, sustainer, nourisher and concluder or annihilator of all the different worlds that exist[6]; he is an embodiment of bliss, peace and felicity[7], and he is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, all powerful, almighty and supreme Lord of all[8]. Ascetic, hermits, sages and seers[9] contemplate and meditate upon him along with Sita (i.e., they remember, invoke, honour, admire, pay homage to and worship Ram and Sita together because they treat them alike; they are like the two poles of a magnet which must have these two opposite poles in order to be known as a magnet; both of them are manifestations of the same Brahm)[10] (21).

[1]रामोऽचिन्त्यो, [2]नित्य, [3]चित्स, [4]सर्वसाक्षी, [5]सर्वान्तः स्थः, [6]सर्वलोकैककर्त्ता, भर्त्ता हर्त्ता, [7]नन्दमूर्त्ति, [8]र्विभूमा, [9]योगिभिः, [10]सीतायोगाच्चिन्त्यते

अपाणिपादो जवनो गृहीता पश्यतय चक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः ।
स वेत्ति विश्वं नहि तस्य वेत्ता तमाहुरन्यं पुरुषं पुराणम् ।।२२।।

He (Sri Ram), in his divine, macrocosmic, subtle and all-pervading

form, is able to go everywhere without having a physical leg to take him there (for the simple reason that he is present everywhere and there is no place where he needs to go)[1]. He can accept everything without having a physical hand to accept them[2]. He sees everything though he has no physical eye[3]. Similarly, he hears everything without an ear[4]. He knows all about the cosmos (or the entire creation)[5], but there is no one who knows him fully[6]. He is the one who is called 'Purush' (the macrocosmic unmanifested divine Male aspect of creation, also known as Viraat Purush)[7] by the Purans and other scriptures[8] (22).

[1]अपाणिपादो, [2]जवनो गृहीता, [3]पश्यतय चक्षुः, [4]स शृणोत्यकर्णः, [5]स वेत्ति विश्वं, [6]नहि तस्य वेत्ता तमाहुरन्यं, [7]पुरुषं, [8]पुराणम्

[Note :- (i) The word 'Purush' literally means a 'male'. The words refers to the male aspect of nature or creation. This aspect is also known as Viraat Purush from whom the creator Brahma emerged, and who himself is a manifested form of the unmanifested Brahm. From the point of a human being, both Brahm and Purush are invisible to a man's naked eye even as distant stars are not visible to us though they exist in the bowels of the universe. (ii) Verse nos. 19-22 proclaim the divinity of Sri Ram.]

तयोः परं जन्म उदाहरिष्ये ययोर्यथाकारणदेहधारिणोः ।
अरूपिणो रूपविधारणं पुनर्मृणां महानुग्रह एव केवलम् ।।२३।।

I shall describe to you the reason why the supreme, transcendental Lord[1] —here referring to both Sri Ram and Sita —had taken a birth and assumed a gross body[2]. He who is formless and attributeless[3] had assumed a human form[4] only for the good and welfare of humans (and other living creatures) on this earth[5] (23).

[1]परं, [2]जन्म उदाहरिष्ये ययोर्यथाकारणदेहधारिणोः, [3]अरूपिणो, [4]रूपविधारणं, [5]पुनर्मृणां महानुग्रह एव केवलम्

पठन् द्विजोवागृषभत्वमीयात्क्षत्रान्वयो भूमिपतित्वमीयात् ।
वणिग्जनोपण्यफलत्वमीयाच्छृण्वन्हि शूद्रोहि महत्त्वमीयात् ।।२४।।

By reading it and reciting it, a Brahmin (the senior most class in society who is supposed to be its moral guide, adviser and teacher) is blessed with the reward of fine oratory and possessing the powers

of making a pleasant and sweet speech[1]. A Kshatriya (the warrior class in society who protects it) is rewarded with lordship over the realm[2]. A Vaishya (the trading and farming community designated with the job of providing comfort and daily needs of the other 3 classes) gets success in his trade and commercial activities[3]. And a Shudra (the class which is designated to serve other classes and free them from the tedious burden of daily chores and help them to concentrate on their designated jobs) gets importance and recognition in society[4] (24).

[1]पठन् द्विजोवागृषभत्वमीया, [2]त्क्षत्रान्वयोभूमिपतित्वमीयात्, [3]वणिग्जनोपण्यफलत्वमीयाच्छृण्वन्हि, [4]शूद्रोहि महत्त्वमीयात्

Thus ends Canto 1 of the ancient and glorious epic story of Sri Ram and Sita, called Adbhut Ramayan, describing the divine greatness of the two, and establishing their divinity and non-dual supremacy over the rest of the creation.

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Canto 2
King Ambrish gets a boon from Narayan (Vishnu)

King Trishanku was a king of Ayodhya and his queen was Padmavati. She was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. Once she had a dream that the Lord has given her a divine fruit, and she immediately ate it. Thus was born their son Ambarish. Upon death of his father Trishanku, he ascended the throne of Ayodhya and did severe Tapa (austerity, penance and keeping rigorous religious vows) which pleased Vishnu who gave him certain boons, especially the protection provided by the Lord's discus against enemies and even the curse of Brahmins. Thus blessed and honoured by Vishnu, he returned and ruled over the kingdom with righteousness, probity and piety. His realm stretched as far as the land mass extended, up to the boarders of the ocean (i.e., he was an emperor). The land was prosperous, people were happy and religious, and the honourable king did hundreds of sacrifices.

भरद्वाज! श्रृणुष्वाथ रामचन्द्रस्य धीमतः ।
जन्मनः कारणं विप्र! इक्ष्वाकुकुलवारिधौ ।।१।।
सीतायाश्च महादेव्याः पृथिव्यां जन्महेतुकम्
तत्र रामकथामादौ वक्ष्यामि मुनिपुङ्गव ।।२।।

'Oh Brahmin Bharadwaj! Listen carefully to why and how the great Sri Ram Chandra took birth in the great family with a lineage known as 'Ikshwaku'. This royal family was very large and renowned like the ocean. [That is, it resembled an ocean in its vastness, fame and glory whereas all other existing royal families of the time were like seas.] (1)

I will also tell you why the great goddess Sita took birth on this earth. Oh exalted sage! First of all, to start with, I shall narrate the story of Sri Ram (2). [1-2]

श्रूयतां मुनिशार्दूले अम्बरीषकथाश्रयम् ।
पुरुषोत्तममाहात्म्यं सर्वपापहरं परम् ।।३।।

Oh sage, you are like a lion amidst sages (i.e., you are like a great king of the sages residing on the banks of river Tamsa)[1]! Listen to the story of Ambarish. This fascinating narration has the potential to eliminate all the great sins and evils that torment a creature in this mortal world[2] (3).

[1]मुनिशार्दूले, [2]सर्वपापहरं परम्

त्रिशंकोर्दयिता भार्या सर्वलक्षणशोभिता ।
अम्बरीषस्य जननी नित्यै शोचसमन्विता ।।४।।

The dear wife of king Trishanku possessed all the noble virtues and good characters that one should possess. She was the mother of Ambarish and did the different religious sacraments (such as bathing, doing worship, performing religious rites, offering sacrifices, making charities) daily (4).

योगनिद्रासमारूढं शेषपर्यङ्कशायिनम् ।
नारायणं महात्मानं ब्रह्माण्डकमलोद्भवम् ।।५।।
तमसा कालरुद्राख्यं रजसा कनकाण्डजम् ।
सत्वेन सर्वगं विष्णुं सर्वदेवनमस्कृतम् ।।६।।

Lord Narayan— who reclines on the back of the coiled legendary python called Sheshnath (floating on the surface of the legendary

celestial ocean of milk called Kshir sagar) and stays in the blissful sleeping state obtained as a result of deep meditation (called Yog-Nidra)[1] —is the progenitor of the entire cosmos(called Brahmaand) in his manifestation as the one who has his origin in the divine lotus (a reference to Brahma who emerged form a lotus coming out of Viraat Purush's navel)[2] (5).

That Narayan assumes or transforms himself into 3 forms based on the predominance of one of the 3 basic qualities or Gunas, the Tam, Raj and Sat[3] which are inherent to and integral part of all creation – (a) when he has 'Tamoguna' as a predominant characteristic, his form is known as 'Kalrudra' or Shiva, the annihilator; (b) when 'Rajoguna' is the dominant player, he is known as Brahma, the creator ; and (c) when 'Satoguna' is prominent, he is known as Vishnu, the sustainer. This last form of Vishnu is revered, honoured, adored and worshipped by all the Gods who bow and pay their obeisance to this glorious and honorable form of the Lord (6). [5-6]

[1]योगनिद्रासमारूढं, [2]कमलोद्भवम् [3]तमसा रजसा सत्वेन

[Note: - (1) There are 4 states of existence according to Vedanta in which a creature exists-(a) the waking state of consciousness called 'Jagrat' , (b) the dream state of consciousness called 'Swapna', (c) the deep sleep state of consciousness called ' Shushupta' , and (e) the blissful state of consciousness called 'Turiya' . There is a 5th state called 'Turiyatit' which transcends the 4th state. 'Yog-Nidra' means 'a perpetual sleep obtained as a result of Yoga or meditation' It is a constant trance – like state called 'Samadhi' and refers to the 3rd till the 5th stages. In this state there is complete beatitude and felicity.

(2) The 3 qualities that determine the behaviour, temperament, tendencies, habits and inclinations of a creature are—(a) 'Sat' or the best, most righteous, virtuous, noble and exalted qualities. It is marked by mercy, compassion, spirituality, benevolence, magnanimity, munificence, grace, kindness, probity, propriety, noble thoughts and deeds. (b) 'Raj'—this is a medium quality characterised by worldly

passions and desires. (c) 'Tam'—this is the lowest quality marked by the tendency to commit sins, be evil and pervert, selfish and mean. Naturally therefore, those who possess 'Tam' in excess, cause strife and discord, leading to ill-will and animosity, warfare and death. The 2 latter qualities relate to expansionism and worldly gratifications. The 1st quality leads to spiritualism.]

अर्चयामास सततं वाङ्मनःकायवृत्तिभिः ।
माल्यदामादिकं सर्वं स्वयमेव व्यचीकरत् ।।७।।

She regularly worshipped that Narayan with great devotion in her mind and heart, by her deeds and actions as well as by her speech[1]. She held a rosary in her hands and personally served the Lord (i.e., she did all the rituals of formal worship herself instead of asking her assistants do the formalities for her) (7).

[1]वाङ्मनःकायवृत्तिभिः

[Note :- (i) Worshipping the Lord by 'mind and heart' refers to his constant remembrance, contemplation and meditation upon him, always keeping the mind pegged on his divine stories and deeds which he had done in one of his sojourns on this earth, and enshrining his divine form in one's heart with reverence and devotion. (ii) Worshipping the Lord by deeds and actions means, inter alia, doing righteous deeds, taking noble actions, having pleasant demeanours, making charities and showing compassion and mercy to others, besides the physical rituals involved in formal worship. (iii) Worship by speech involves singing prayers, repetition of holy Mantras (divine words), reading and reciting scriptures, preaching, talking kindly and amiably to others, singing the glories of the Lord using pleasing and sweet words, giving righteous and noble advice, etc]

गन्धादिपेषणश्चैव धूपद्रव्यादिकं तथा ।
तत्सर्वं कौतुकाविष्टा स्वयमेव चकार सा ।।८।।

Offering of fragrant incense, perfumes and delicious food to the Lord were done by her personally with due devotion, reverence and eagerness. She was diligent and active in these offerings, and she did them sportingly and cheerfully (8).

शुभा पद्मावती नित्यं वचो नारायणेति वै ।
अनन्तेति च सा नित्यं भाषमाणा यतव्रता ।।९।।

That lady (wife of king Trishanku) named Padmawati was endowed with all the good and auspicious characters[1]. She pronounced or repeated the holy name of the Lord most reverentially by saying 'Namoh Narayanaye' (literally meaning 'Oh Lord Narayan, I reverentially bow before you)[2]. Besides this, she also repeated or uttered the other eternal holy names of the Lord regularly on a daily basis[3] (9).

[1]शुभा पद्मावती, [2]नित्यं वचो नारायणेति, [3]नित्यं भाषमाणा यतव्रता

[Note :- [1]The word 'वचो' literally means 'to speak, to pronounce, to declare, to proclaim'. But it refers to the practice of doing 'Japa' or repetition of the holy name with the help of a rosary held in the hand. [2]Lord Narayan has a thousand names. Those names are listed in 'Vishnau Sahastranaam Stotra'. All these names indicate one or the other facets of the Lord's glories.]

दशवर्षसहस्राणि तत्परेणान्तरात्मना ।
अर्चयामास गोविन्दं गन्धपुष्पादिभिः शुभैः ।।१०।।

She continued to worship and honour Govind (one of the names of Vishnu) for 10 thousand years by offering flowers and perfumes with due devotion, reverence and sincerity, with diligence and commitment (10).

विष्णुभक्तान्महाभागान् सर्वपापविवर्जितान् ।
दानमानार्चनैर्नित्यं धनै रत्नैरतोषयत् ।।११।।

She used to give alms daily and keep the sinless devotes of Lord Vishnu contented and satisfied by giving them sufficient donations, showing due respect or honour to them, bestowing them with ample wealth and property, and liberally giving away gems and jewels etc to them as largesse (11).

ततः कदाचित्सा देवी द्वादश्यां समु पोष्य वै ।
हरेरग्रे महाभागा सुष्वाप पतिना सह ।।१२।।

Once she had kept a fast on the 12th day of the lunar fortnight (called 'Dwadash'). On that auspicious day, that great lady slept with her husband in front of Hari (i.e., she slept in front of an image

of Lord Vishnu whom she worshipped) (12).

तत्र नारायणो देवस्तामाह पुरुषोत्तमः ।
किमिच्छसि वरं भद्रे मत्तः किं ब्रूहि भामिनि ।।१३।।
सा दृष्टवा तं वरं वव्रे पुत्रस्त्वद्भक्तिमान्भवेत् ।
सार्वभौमो महातेजाः स्वकर्मनिरतः शुचिः ।।१४।।

Lord Narayan, who is the most exalted amongst the Gods and the macrocosmic form of the Lord, called 'Purush', said to her, 'Oh Lady! What boon or blessing do you wish to have?' (13). Seeing the Lord, she humbly submitted, ' Give me a son who is devoted to you[1], who would be an emperor[2], is endowed with great energy, strength, radiance, glory and majesty[3], is very diligent, sincere, steadfast and committed to his duties[4], and possesses purity of heart and mind[5]' (14). [13-14]

[1]पुत्रस्त्वद्भक्तिमान्भवेत्, [2]सार्वभौमो, [3]महातेजाः, [4]स्वकर्मनिरतः, [5]शुचिः

तथेत्युक्त्वा ददौ तस्यै फलमेकं जनार्दनः ।
सा प्रबुद्धा फलं दृष्ट्वा भर्त्रे सर्व निवेद्य च ।।१५।।
भक्षयामास संहृष्टा फलं तद्गतमानसा ।
ततः कालेन सा देवी पुत्रं कुलविवर्द्धनम् ।।१६।।
असूयत शुभाचारं वासुदेवपरायणम् ।
शुभलक्षणसम्पन्नं चक्राङ्कितमनुत्तमम् ।।१७।।

When she made this request, Janardan (one of the names of Vishnu; one who is compassionate and benevolent towards his followers) gave her a fruit (in her dream). Seeing the fruit (in her dreams), she woke up with a start and told the entire episode to her husband (15).

She then ate that fruit with great devotion and reverence. Consequentially, when the proper time approached, she gave birth to a son who would increase the fame and glory of the clan[1]. In due course of time (16), that child exhibited all the good and auspicious characteristics[2], was devoted to Vasudeo (Lord Vishnu)[3], possessed auspicious, noble and virtuous qualities[4], and had divine marks on the body, such as the sign of 'Chakra' (the discus held by Lord Vishnu)[5]. In short, he was an excellent child possessing immaculate qualities and virtues[6] (17). [15-17]

[1]कुलविवर्द्धनम्, [2]असूयत शुभाचारं, [3]वासुदेवपरायणम्, [4]शुभलक्षणसम्पन्नं, [5]चक्राङ्कित, [6]मनुत्तमम्

जातं दृष्ट्वा पिता पुत्रं क्रियाः सर्वाश्चकार वै ।
अम्बरीष इति ख्यातो लोके समभवत्प्रभुः ।।१८।।

Seeing that a son has been born, his father (Trishanku) did all the required sacraments and rituals needed to be done at the time of a child's birth. The son later on became renowned in the world by the name of Ambarish (18).

पितर्युपरते श्रीमानभिषिक्तोमहात्मभिः ।
मंत्रिष्वाधाय सज्यं च तप उग्रं चकार सः ।।१९।।
संवत्सर सहस्रं वै जगन्नारायणं प्रभुम् ।
हृत्पुण्डरीकमध्यस्थं सूर्यमण्डलमध्यगम् ।।२०।।

When his father died, that gentleman son ascended the throne. He handed over the charge of the day-to-day administration of the kingdom to his ministers and went to do severe Tapa (austerity, penance, meditation, keeping stern vows such as fasting etc.) (19). For 1,000 Samvatsars (1 Samvatsar = 1 year), he repeated the holy name of (or contemplated and meditated upon) the Lord of the universe (known as 'Jagat Narayan') present in the centre of his lotus - like heart. The lord was splendorous, radiant and dazzling like the core of the sun (20). [19-20]

शंखचक्रगदापद्मं धारयन्तं चतुर्भुजम् ।
शुद्धजाम्बूनदनिभं ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मकम् ।।२१।।
सर्वाभरणसंयुक्तं पीताम्बरधरं प्रभुम् ।
श्रीवत्सवक्षसं देवं पुरुषं पुरुषोत्तमम् ।।२२।।
ततो गरुडमारुह्य सर्वदेवैरभिष्टुतः ।
आजगाम स विश्वात्मा सर्वलोकनमस्कृतः ।।२३।।
ऐरावतमिवाचिन्त्य कृत्वा वै गरुडं हरिः ।
स्वयं शक्र इवासीनस्तमाह नृपसत्तमम् ।।२४।।

The Lord who holds the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus in his four hands, whose countenance is radiant like pure gold, who embodies in himself all the 3 Trinity Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (21), who was adorned with all the ornaments, who wears a 'Pitambar' (a seamless golden coloured, silk, body-wrapping cloth) and is a Lord of all, who has the mark called 'Srivatsa' (श्री वत्स) on his chest[1], who is the God of all humans as well as the most exalted

macrocosmic Male aspect of Nature who is the Lord of all other Gods[2] (22), who rides the legendary mount called Garud (the eagle, heron bird), who is worshipped and adored by all the Gods, and who is the macrocosmic Soul of the cosmos before whom the whole world bows to pay its obeisance (23) —that supreme, transcendental Lord called Hari appeared before the exalted king in the form of, or disguised as Indra[3] (the king of Gods) sitting astride his elephant called Erawat, who was actually Garud in the disguise of an elephant (24). [21-24]

[1]श्रीवत्सवक्षसं, [2]देवं पुरुषं पुरुषोत्तमम्, [3]स्वयं शक्र

[Note :- (i) The legend behind this mark called Srivatsa on the chest of Vishnu is this -once sage Bhrigu went to Vishnu who was reclining on the bed formed by the coiled Sheshnath, and goddess Laxmi was serving his divine feet. Vishnu did not get up to welcome and show respect to the sage by bowing before him, which made the sage peeved, and he was so angry that he kicked the Lord on his chest. The merciful Lord did not take umbrage at this outrageous act of the sage, but rather blessed him. However, Laxmi cursed the sage that henceforth wealth and prosperity would elude/evade Brahmins. That footprint of sage Brihgu is called 'Srivatsa'. (ii) Indra is called 'Shakra' which is a deformed version of the word 'Shukra' (शक्र–शुक्र) which refers to the male sperm. This word is used to describe Indra because of his lustful, lascivious and promiscuous character].

इन्द्रोऽहमस्मि भद्रं ते किं ददामि तवाद्य वै ।
सर्वलोकेश्वरोऽहं त्वां रक्षितुं समुपागतः ।।२५।।

Lord Narayan, who had taken the form of Indra, said to the king, 'Oh King! I am Indra; what shall I give you? I am the lord of all the Lokas (worlds), and I have come to you to give you protection' (25).

अम्बरीषस्तु तं दृष्ट्वा शक्रमैरावतस्थितम् ।
उवाच वचनं धीमान् विष्णुभक्तिपरायणः ।।२६।।
नाहं त्वामभिसन्धाय तप आतिष्ठवानिह ।
त्वया दत्तश्च नेच्छामि गच्छ शक्र यथासुखम् ।।२७।।
मम नारायणो नाथस्त्वां नस्तोष्येऽमराधिप!।
व्रजेन्द्र मा कृथास्त्वत्र ममाश्रमविलोपनम्।।२८।।

When Ambarish, who was a sincere devotee of Vishnu (विष्णु भगतपरायण), saw Indra sitting on his Erawat elephant, he said, 'I have not done such severe Tapa for you (or to have your divine view). I have no desire to have anything that you wish to give (to me as a boon or blessing). So, Oh Indra, please go away happily from here (27).

My Lord is Narayan (Vishnu). Oh the king of the immortals (or Gods— ऽमराधिपति)! I do not want anything from you, so you may kindly go away from here. Do not waste your time in my hermitage' (28) [26-28].

ततः प्रहस्य भगवान् स्वरूपमकरोद्धरिः।
शार्ङ्ग–चक्र–गदा–पाणिः शङ्खहस्तो जनार्दनः ।।२९।।
गरुड़ोपरि विश्वात्मा नीलाचल इवापराः।
देवगन्धर्वसंघैश्च स्तूयमानः समन्ततः ।।३०।।
प्रणम्य राजा सन्तुष्टस्तुष्टाव गरुड़ध्वजम् ।३०½।

The Lord laughed and revealed his true identity (form) as Janardan (one of the names of Vishnu) who held the bow called 'Sharang', besides holding a discus, a mace, a lotus and a conch[1] in his hands (29). He, who is the soul of the whole universe[2] (i.e. who uniformally pervades in the entire creation and injects life into it as its truthful identity), was astride his legendry mount, the Garud (the legendary eagle, heron bird)[3], and was like a second majestic mountain having a bluish hue, a mountain called 'Neelanchal'[4]. He was being worshipped and his glories were being sung by all the Gods and Gandharvas (celestial musicians) in chorus[5] (30).

Seeing the Lord, the king reverentially bowed before him and began to laud and praise him who has a standard (flag) marked by the insignia of the Garud[6] on it (30½). [29-30½]

[1]शार्ङ्ग–चक्र–गदा–पाणिः शङ्खहस्तो, [2]विश्वात्मा, [3]गरुड़ोपरि, [4]नीलाचल, [5]देवगन्धर्वसंघैश्च, [6]गरुड़ध्वजजम्

प्रसीद लोकनाथस्त्वं मम नाथ जनार्दनः ।।३१।।
कृष्ण कृष्ण जगन्नाथ सर्वलोकनमस्कृत।
त्वमादिस्त्वमनादिस्त्वमनन्तः च पुरुषः प्रभुः ।।३२।।

'Oh Janardan! Be pleased with me, Oh Lord who is benevolent, merciful, gracious, kind, magnanimous and beneficent towards his followers[1]. You are my Lord[2] as well as the Lord of the Universe[3]. Oh Krishna

(dark complexioned Lord)! The entire world pays its obeisance to you and bows before you[4]. You are the macrocosmic primordial/primary Purush (or the first Male, or the male aspect of Nature)[5]; you are the supreme, transcendental Lord who was present in the beginning, nay, who was present even before the beginning of creation, who is most ancient and has no end[6] (32). [31-32]

[1]प्रसीद लोकनाथस्त्वं, [2]मम नाथ जनार्दनः, [3]जगन्नाथ, [4]सर्वलोकनमस्कृत, [5]पुरुषः, [6]त्वमादिस्त्वमनादिस्त्वमनन्तः च प्रभुः

[Note :- The words Janardan and Krishan are usually used for Lord Vishnu because he is merciful and benevolent towards his devotees (Janardan) and is dark complexioned like the dark blue (azure) colour of the sky (Krishna).]

अप्रमेयो विभुर्विष्णुर्गोविन्दः कमलेक्षणः ।
महेश्वरांशजो मध्यः पुष्करः खगमः खगः ।।३३।।
कव्यवाहः कपाली त्वं हव्यवाहः प्रभञ्जनः ।
आदिदेवः क्रियानन्दः परमात्मनि संस्थितः ।।३४।।

You are 'Apramaye'[1] (one who is limitless, boundless, endless, measureless, without parameters) and 'Vibho'[2] (omnipotent, almighty, omnipresent, all - pervading, eternal, magnanimous and majestic Lord). You are known as Vishnu as well as Govind[3]. You have lotus eyes[4]. Lord Mahesh (Shiva) has been created from one of your fractions[5] (i.e. Shiva is but only a fraction of your whole self —महेश्वराजो). You are the central core of the essence of Pushkar[6*]. You are like the (vast, fathomless, measureless, endless) sky in which the birds, the clouds, the stars, the wind, the sun, the moon and the Gods are present (and still can't find an end of it)[7**] (33).

You are the one to whom the offerings made to ancestors are actually offered[8]. You are the one who roams in the cemetery or the cremation ground with a hollowed-out upturned skull in your hand (i.e., you are Lord Shiva who is the patron God of the cremation ground)[9***]. You are the one who accepts all the food offerings that are made to the fire sacrifice[10]. You are the annihilator or concluder of the world (or, you are the one who brings this chapter of the creation to a close)[11]. You are the Lord who was present in the very beginning of creation[12]. You are the one who

performs all deeds cheerfully as if they were mere sports or playful activities[13]. You are the one who is the Supreme Soul of the creation[14] in whom everything that exists is established, is based and founded upon[15] (34). [33-34]

[1]अप्रमेयो, [2]विभु, [3]र्विष्णुर्गोविन्दः, [4]कमलेक्षणः, [5]महेश्वरांशजो, [6]मध्यः पुष्करः, [7]खगमः खगः, [8]त्वं हव्यवाहः, [9]कपाली, [10]कव्यवाहः, [11]प्रभञ्जनः, [12]आदिदेवः, [13]क्रियानन्दः, [14]परमात्मनि, [15]संस्थितः

[Note :- *(i) The word 'Pushkar' (पुष्कर) has many connotations, such as a lotus, a water body (e.g., a pond), water, sun, sky, snake, a part or a fraction, a stork or crane, Vishnu, Shiva, Buddha (an enlightened one), and the tip of an elephant's trunk. The word 'Madhya' (मध्यः) means center, middle. So, the combined word refers to— (a) the core or the thalamus of the lotus flower were the nectar is stored; (b) the core of the splendorous sun where, according to the various Upanishads, the supreme Purush is said to be established; (c) Vishnu, because he is the 'middle of the 3 Trinity Gods' consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; (d) 'Buddha', because he is enlightened and consciousness personified.

**(ii) The word 'Khag' means a bird, cloud, star, sun, moon, wind and the Gods. By using this single word 'Khag', sage Valmiki has deftly covered all these entities in one go. We must note that all these are present in the sky. Some have subtle, invisible and all-pervading form —like the wind, while some are spread across the sky —like the cloud, some are dazzling in their splendour and light up the world besides nourishing and sustaining the creation —like the sun; some are soothing and uplifting for an agitated mind —such as the moon; some are ordinary creatures having a definitive form having a birth, a life cycle and death —such as the birds; some are infinitely far away and twinkle against the dark black canopy of the night sky, representing so many hopes and aspirations of a creature against the backdrop of illusions, delusions and ignorance symbolised by the darkness of the night. All these characteristics are found in Vishnu. So he is likened to a 'Khag'.

***(iii) Though he is a sustainer of the world, but by calling him 'Kapali', the sage wishes to emphasise that there

is no difference between Vishnu and Shiva. In fact the word 'Maheshwaranjaso' (महेश्वरांजसो) in verse number 33 is a clear indication of this view.]

त्वां प्रपन्नोऽस्मि गोविन्द पाहि मां पुष्करेक्षण ।
नान्या गतिस्त्वदन्या मे त्वामेव शरणं गतः ।।३५।।

Oh Govind! I take the shelter of your (divine, holy and august) feet. Oh the one with lotus eyes! Protect me, save me. I have no succour, no solace and no refuge anywhere except with you. I have come to take refuge with you' (35).

तमाह भगवान् विष्णुः किं ते हृदि चिकीर्षितम् ।
तत्सर्वं सम्प्रदास्यामि भक्तोऽसि मम सुव्रत ।।३६।।
भक्तप्रियोऽस्मि सततं तस्माद्दातुमिहागतः ।३६½।

Then Lord Vishnu asked him, 'Oh the one who keeps righteous vows (सुव्रत)! What is your wish or desire? You are my devotee; I shall give you everything that you wish to have. I am always benevolent, munificent and magnanimous towards my devotees. That is why I have come to give you any fruit or reward that you may wish to have' (36-36½).

अम्बरीषस्तु तत् श्रुत्वा हर्षगद्गदया गिरा ।।३७।।
प्रोवाच परमात्मानं नारायणमनामयम् ।
त्वयि विष्णौ परानन्दे नित्यं मे वर्त्ततां मतिः ।।३८।।
भवेयं त्वत्परोनित्यं वाङ्मनः कायकर्मभिः ।
पालयिष्यामि पृथिवीं कृत्वा वै वैष्णवं जगत् ।।३९।।
यज्ञहोमार्चनैश्चैव तर्पिष्यामि सुरोत्तमान् ।
वैष्णवान् पालयिष्यामि हनिष्यामि च शात्रवान् ।।४०।।

Hearing that he is being addressed as a devotee of the Lord, Ambarish was overwhelmed with joy and happiness[1]. He said to the supreme, transcendental Lord (or Parmatma) who is faultless and immaculate (Anamaye)[2] (37½), 'Oh Vishnu who is eternally blissful[3]. Let me have constant devotion in you (38).

I shall worship and serve you very sincerely with my mind and heart, with my speech, my deeds and actions. I would look after the earth (i.e., the realm) with diligence and commitment, and ensure that it (i.e., its inhabitants) become great devotees of Vishnu (39).

I shall satisfy the Gods by doing various fire sacrifices, observing different religious rituals and doing many other types of worships and offering of prayers[4]. I shall take care of those who are 'Vaishnavas' (i.e., those who are the followers of Lord Vishnu)[5], and I shall vanquish the enemies (or the opponents) of Vishnu and his devotees, i.e., the 'Asurs'[6] (40). [37-40]

[1]हर्षगद्गदयाए [2]मनामयम्, [3]परानन्दे नित्यं, [4]यज्ञहोमार्चनैश्चैव, [5]वैष्णवान् पालयिष्यामि, [6]हनिष्यामि च शात्रवान्

एवमुक्तस्तु भगवान् प्रत्युवाच नृपोत्तमम् ।
एवमस्तु तवेच्छा वै चक्रमेतत्सुदर्शनम् ।।४१।।
पुरा रुद्रप्रभावेन लब्धं वै दुर्लभं मया ।
ऋषिशापादिकं दुःखं शत्रु रोगादिकं तथा ।।४२।।
निहनिष्यति ते दुःखमित्युक्त्वान्तरधीयत ।४२½।

When the exalted King made the above submission (or promise), the Lord (Bhagwan) replied to him, 'It shall be as you say[1]. Your desires would be fulfilled[2]. This discus of mine, called 'Chakra Sudarshan'[3] (41), which I have got as a gracious gesture (a gift) from Rudra (Shiva) and which is as majestic, powerful, potent, influential and effective as the wrath of Rudra himself[4], and is a very rare and unique weapon[5], will destroy and overcome all your torments; it shall protect you against the curses of sages and saints[6], from all types of sorrows, miseries, anguish and grief[7], from your enemies[8] and other troubles such as different diseases and illnesses that would ever afflict you[9]'. Saying this, he (Vishnu) became invisible (i.e., he vanished from sight from there) (42½). [41-42½]

[1]एवमस्तु, [2]तवेच्छा, [3]चक्रसुदर्शनम्, [4]रुद्रप्रभावेन, [5]दुर्लभं, [6]ऋषिशापादिकं, [7]दुःखं, [8]शत्रु, [9]रोगादिकं निहनिष्यति

ततः प्रणम्य मुदितो राजा नारायणं प्रभुम् ।।४३।।
प्रविश्य नगरीं दिव्यामयोध्यां पर्यपालयत् ।
ब्राह्मणादींस्तथा वर्णान् स्वे स्वे कर्मण्ययोजयत् ।।४४।।

Then the king cheerfully bowed before Lord Narayan (43) and entered (or came back) to the divine, majestic, magnificent and glorious city of Ayodhya. He began to rule over it. He ordained (or decreed) that all the classes of society, such as the Brahmins and others, should pursue their respective vocations diligently and righteously (44). [43-44]

नारायणपरो नित्यं विष्णु भक्तानकल्मषान् ।
पालयामास हृष्टात्मा विशेषेण जनाधिप: ।।४५।।

The king was persistently and consistently devoted to Lord Narayan (Vishnu). He looked after his subjects well with special attention for the devotees of Vishnu (45).

अश्वमेधशतैरिष्ट्वा वाजपेयशतानि च ।
पालयामास पृथिवीं सागरावरणामिमाम् ।।४६।।

He did a hundred 'Ashwamedh Yagyas' (अश्वमेधशतैरिष्ट्वा—the horse sacrifices) and a hundred 'Vajpaye Yagyas' (वाजपेयशतानि). He took care of the land extending up to the ocean (46).

[Note :- (i) A horse sacrifice was one in which a consecrated horse was let loose, and it was followed by a huge army. The horse roamed about freely, and the territory over which it went was annexed, either peacefully by a treaty or by waging a war. When the horse returned, it was slaughtered as a sacrificial animal and offered to the fire sacrifice. The king then declared himself an emperor. (ii) The Vajpaye Yagya was done for long periods of time. The main text used for the purpose was the Yajurveda. Those special category of Brahmins (priests) who specialised in this sacrifice were called 'Vajpaye']

गृहे गृहे हरिस्तस्थौ वेदघोषो गृहे गृहे ।
नामघोषो हरेश्चैव यज्ञघोषस्तथैव च ।।४७।।

During that time, Lord Hari was established (i.e., his image was consecrated) in every household of the city; the hymns of the Vedas reverberated in each household; the divine name of Hari was chanted aloud and echoed in each of them, and so was the loud noise made during formal religious sacrifices (47).

[Note :- Each household of the kingdom performed their own little ritual and sacrifice on individual basis in addition to the one organised by the king which was on a large scale, for it was a state organised ceremony. In short, the verse implies that all the people of the kingdom were religious in their outlook; all of them performed their religious duties diligently as ordained by the scriptures and tradition prevalent in those times. Piety, devotion, dedication, religious fervour and

righteousness were the dominant features everywhere.]

अभवन्नृपशार्दूले तस्मिन् राज्यं प्रशासति।
नासस्या नातृणा भूमिर्न दुर्भिक्षादिभिर्युता ।।४८।।
रोगहीना प्रजा नित्यं सर्वोपद्रववर्जिता ।४८½।

These types of activities were a common feature or a regular practice in the kingdom of the great emperor-king, who was like a lion amongst kings[1]. The earth was full of grass[2] (such as herbs, vegetables, plants, trees, creepers) as well as well provided with food[3] (such as cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits). There was no trace or hint of famine or drought[4] (48). The king's subjects were free from diseases[5] as well as all other kinds of troubles and torments[6] (48½). [48-48½]

[1]न्नृपशार्दूले, [2]तृणा, [3]सस्या, [4]दुर्भिक्षा, [5]रोगहीना, [6]सर्वोपद्रववर्जिता

अम्बरीषो महातेजा: पालयामास मेदिनीम् ।।४९।।
स वै महात्मा सततं च रक्षित: सुदर्शनेन प्रियदर्शनेन ।
शुभां समुद्रावधिसन्ततां महीं सुपालयामास महीमहेन्द्र: ।।५०।।

In this way, the most glorious and majestic king Ambarish sustained and took care of his realm (49). Protected by the Sudarshan Chakra (the discus of Lord Vishnu which was given to him as described in verse no. 41-42), he took good care of the earth (his territory) that extended up to the 4 oceans (or which was surrounded on all the sides by the 4 oceans. That is, the realm of king Ambarish covered the whole land mass known at that time) (50). [49-50]

Thus ends canto 2 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan composed by sage Valmiki describing the story of king Ambarish and his getting boons from lord Vishnu.

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Canto 3
The episode of sages Narad and Parvat desiring to marry king Ambarish's daughter

Sages Narad and Parvat came to visit king Ambarish and were so enchanted and infatuated by the beauty of his marriageable daughter Srimati that both the sages wished to marry her. The king was in a quandary and became utterly stunned and dumfounded, not knowing what to do. He decided to let the girl choose her groom. The two sages hurried to their patron God, Lord Vishnu, separately and expressed their desire to marry the same girl. In their enthusiasm to preempt the chance of the girl taking a liking to his competitor, each of them asked Lord Vishnu to make his opponent look like a monkey to deter the girl from choosing him. Getting an assurance from the Lord 'that he will do what is good for them', they hurried back to Ayodhya to participate in the marriage ceremony wherein the girl would have the freedom to select her own groom.

तस्यैवं वर्त्तमानस्य कन्या कमल लोचना ।
श्रीमती नाम विख्याता सर्वलक्षणशोभिता ।।१।।

Presently, he (king Ambarish) was blessed with a girl child named Srimati who was lotus-eyed (i.e., very beautiful and attractive) and was famous for her virtues and noble characters (1).

प्रदानसमयं प्राप्ता देवमायेव शोभना ।
तस्मिन्काले मुनिः श्रीमान् नारदोऽभ्यागतोगृहम् ।।२।।
अम्बरीषस्य राज्ञो वै पर्वतश्च महाद्युतिः ।२½।

By the time she was mature and ready for giving away in marriage[1], she was adorned with a divine beauty befitting Gods (or she resembled a Goddess in her beauty and charm)[2]. In one of those days, sage Narad came to the place of Ambarish (2). He was accompanied by the glorious sage named Parvat who was radiant like electric[3] (2½). [2-2½]

[1]प्रदानसमयं प्राप्ता, [2]देवमायेव शोभना, [3]पर्वतश्च महाद्युतिः

तावुभावागतौ दृष्ट्वा प्रणिपत्य यथाविधि ।।३।।
अम्बरीषो महातेजाः पूजयामास तावृषी ।३½।

Seeing that the two sages have arrived at his palace, the most radiant, majestic and glorious king Ambarish welcomed them reverentially and worshipped them with due honour (3-3½).

कन्यां तां प्रेक्ष्य भगवान् नारदः प्राह विस्मितः ।।४।।
केयं राजन् महाभागा कन्या सुरसुतोपमा ।
ब्रूहि धर्मभूतां श्रेष्ठ सर्वलक्षणशोभिता ।।५।।

Seeing that girl, Lord Narad was amazed by her beauty and became infatuated with her. He asked the king, 'Say oh righteous king, whose is this daughter who is like a daughter of some God and is endowed with all the excellent qualities and virtues that one can ever expect to posses' [4-5].

निशम्य वचनं तस्य राजा प्राह कृताञ्जलिः ।
दुहितेयं मम विभो श्रीमती नाम नामतः ।।६।।
प्रदानसमयं प्राप्ता वरमन्विषती शुभा ।६½।

Hearing these words of the sage, the king replied with joined hands, 'This girl named Srimati is my daughter. She has attained maturity and is searching for an appropriate groom to marry her' [6-6½].

इत्युक्तोमुनिशार्दूलस्तामिच्छन्नारदो द्विजः ।।७।।
पर्वतोऽपि मुनिस्तां वै चक्रमे सर्षिसत्तमः ।७½।

When the king said so, the exalted sage (or the sage who was like a lion or a king amongst sages —i.e., Narad)[1] desired to have her (Srimati, i.e., wished to marry her). Similarly, the sage named Parvat also wished to have her hands in marriage simultaneously [7-7½].

अनुज्ञाप्य च राजानं नारदो वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।।८।।
रहस्याहूय धर्म्मात्मा मम देहि सुतामिमाम् ।
पर्वतोऽपि तथा प्राह राजानं रहसि प्रभुम् ।।९।।

Narad expressed his secret desire[1] to the king and said, 'Oh the righteous one[2]! Give your daughter to me in marriage[3]'. Similarly, Parvat also told the king the same thing (that he wished to marry his daughter) [8-9].

[1]रहस्याहूय, [2]धर्म्मात्मा, [3]मम देहि सुतामिमाम्

तावुभौ प्राह धर्म्मात्मा प्रणिपत्य भयार्दितः ।
उभौ भवन्तौ कन्यां मे प्रार्थमानौ कथं त्वहम् ।।१०।।

करिष्यामि महाप्राज्ञो शृणु नारद मे वचः ।
त्वश्च पर्वत मे वाक्यं शृणु वक्ष्यामि यत्प्रभो ।।११।।
कन्येयं युवयोरेकं वरयिष्यति चेत् शुभा ।
तस्मै कन्यां प्रयच्छामि नान्यथा शक्तिरस्ति मे ।।१२।।

When both of them said the same thing, the king was aghast and terrified. He pleaded, 'Both of you pray to me to have the girl (10). In such a situation, oh Narad and oh Parvat, how can I fulfill you desire? Hence, listen to what I have to say (11). Let the girl choose any one of you herself, and I shall give her to anyone of you whom she selects. Otherwise, I do not have the power or strength in me to give her to any one of you myself' (12). [10-12]

तथेत्युक्त्वा तु तौ विप्रौ श्‍व आयास्याव एवहि ।
इत्युक्त्वा मुनिशार्दूलौ जग्मतुः प्रीतमानसौ ।।१३।।
वासुदेवपरो नित्यमुभौ ज्ञानवतां वरौ ।१३½।

Saying 'alright', the two great sages promised to comeback the next day and they went away. Both of them were very wise and erudite amongst their peers, and both of them were diligent followers of Vasudeo (Vishnu) [13-13½].

विष्णुलोकं ततोगत्वा नारदोमुनिसत्तमः ।।१४।।
प्रणिपत्य हृषीकेशं वाक्यमेतदुवाच ह ।
वृत्तान्तश्च निवेद्याग्रे नाथ नारायणव्यय ।।१५।।
रहसि त्वां प्रवक्ष्यामि नमस्ते भुवनेश्वर ।१५½।

The most exalted sage[1] Narad went to the Vishnu Loka, the divine abode of Lord Vishnu in the heaven, and reverentially prostrated[2] before Hrishikesh (one of the names of Vishnu) (14½). He narrated the entire episode to Narayan (Vishnu) and said, 'Oh Lord Narayan who is imperishable and eternal[3], oh Lord of the universe[4], I want to say something to you privately. I most reverentially bow before you[5]' (15½). [14-15½]

[1]मुनिसत्तमः, [2]प्रणिपत्य, [3]नारायणव्यय, [4]भुवनेश्वर, [5]नमस्ते

ततः प्रहस्य गोविन्दः सर्वात्मा कर्मठं मुनिम् ।।१६।।
ब्रहीत्याह स विश्‍वात्मा मुनिराह च केशवम् ।
त्वदीयोनृपतिः श्रीमानम्बरीषो महामतिः ।।१७।।
तस्य कन्या विशालाक्षी श्रीमती नाम नामतः ।

परिणेतुमहं तां वै इच्छामि वचनं शृणु ।।१८।।
पर्वतोयं मुनिः श्रीमान् तव भृत्यस्तपोनिधिः ।
तामैछत्सोऽपि भगवन्स्तमाह जनाधिपः ।।१९।।
अम्बरीषो महातेजाः कन्येयं युवयोर्वरम् ।
लावण्ययुक्तं वृणुयात् यदि तस्मै ददाम्यहम् ।।२०।।

Govind (Vishnu), who is the all pervading and immanent Atma of the entire creation[1], said to the sage who was steadfast and diligent in his pursuits (i.e., he was very committed to fulfill his wishes)[2] (16)— 'Say'. Then the sage said to that universal soul called Keshav (Vishnu)[3], 'The great gentleman king Ambirsh[4] is your ardent devotee (17). He has a beautiful daughter with large lotus-like eyes[5], named Srimati. I want to marry her[6]. Please listen to me (and oblige me) (18). Sage Parvat is also your devotee and he is a treasury of Tapa (i.e., he possesses all the majestic powers that come by doing severe penances, austerities and observing stern religious vows)[7]. He also desires to marry her[8]. The devotee king of the realm (19), the most glorious and radiant Ambarish has said that he will give the girl (i.e., his daughter Srimati) to anyone to whom she is attracted and takes fancy to by the virtue of his personal charm and majesty (or his own beauty and manly attractiveness)[9] (20). [16-20]

[1]गोविन्दः सर्वात्मा, [2]कर्मठं मुनिम्, [3]विश्‍वात्मा केशवम्, [4]श्रीमानम्बरीषो महामतिः, [5]कन्या विशालाक्षी, [6]परिणेतुमहं तां, [7]भृत्यस्तपोनिधिः, [8]तामैछत्सोऽपि, [9]लावण्ययुक्तं वृणुयात्

इत्याहावां नृपस्तत्र तथेत्युक्त्वाप्यहं ततः।
आगमिष्यामि ते राजन् श्‍वः प्रभाते गृहं प्रति ।।२१।।
आगतोहं जगन्नाथ कर्तुमर्हसि मे प्रियम् ।
वानराननवत् भाति पर्वतस्य मुखं यथा ।।२२।।
तथा कुरु जगन्नाथ मम चेदिच्छसि प्रियम् ।
श्रीमती तु कुरु यथा पश्येन्नान्यः पश्येत्तथाविधम् ।।२३।।

Telling the king 'alright, I shall come to your place the next morning' (21), I have come straight to you for help, oh Lord of the world (Jagganath)[1]! Please do that which is for my good and wherein lies my welfare (or do something for my good in the long run)[2]. Let the face of Parvat (the other sage) become like that of a monkey (22),

and oh Lord of the world[3], for my sake and my welfare and good, if you so wish[4], let it so happen that only Srimati sees that monkey-like face of his (Parvat) and no body else in the assembly is able to see it[5] (23). [21-23]

[1]जगन्नाथ, [2]कर्तुमर्हसि मे प्रियम्, [3]जगन्नाथ, [4]मम चेदिच्छसि प्रियम्, [5]पश्येन्नान्यः पश्येत्तथाविधम्

तथेत्युक्त्वा स गोविन्दः प्रहस्य मधुसूदनः ।
त्वयोक्तं तत्करिष्यामि गच्छ सौम्य! यथासुखम् ॥२४॥
एवमुक्तो मुनिर्हृष्टः प्रणिपत्य जनार्दनम् ।
मन्यमानः कृतात्मानमयोध्यां वै जगाम सः ॥२५॥

When he (Narad) said this, Madhusudan Govind (Vishnu)[1] smiled pleasantly and said, 'I will do as you have said. You can cheerfully and happily go away from here, oh gentleman Narad[2] (24).

Hearing this, the sage felt very obliged and exhilarated[3]. He reverentially prostrated[4] before the Lord, who is munificent and benevolent towards his devotees (and that is why he is called Janardan)[5]. Feeling contented, privileged and fulfilled[6], Narad went confidently back to Ayodhya (feeling certain that he has won the game, as it were, and has preempted Parvat in his endeavour to get Srimati as his wife) (25). [24-25]

[1]मधुसूदनः गोविन्दः, [2]गच्छ सौम्य! यथासुखम्, [3]हृष्टः, [4]प्रणिपत्य, [5]जनार्दनम्, [6]कृतात्मानम

गते मुनिवरे तस्मिन् पर्वतोऽपि महामुनिः ।
प्रणम्य माधवं हृष्टोरहस्येनमुवाच ह ॥२६॥
वृत्तान्तश्च निवेद्याग्रे नारदस्य जगत्पतेः ।
गोलांगुलमुखं यद्वन्मुखं भाति तथा कुरु ॥२७॥
श्रीमती तु यथा पश्येन्नान्यः पश्येत्तथाविधम् ।२७½।

Meanwhile, after the sage's departure, the great sage Parvat arrived and bowed reverentially before Madhav (Vishnu) with a cheerful and expectant heart[1]. He took the Lord into confidence and secretly[2] (26) told him the entire episode about which Narad had already told him earlier. Then he (Parvat) pleaded, 'Oh Lord of the world (Jagatpati)[3]! Make it so happen that the face of Narad turns into a monkey[4], and let it so happen that this face of his is visible to Srimati alone and to no body else' (27½). [26-27½]

[1]हृष्टो, [2]रहस्येनमुवाच, [3]जगत्पतेः, [4]गोलांगुलमुखं

तच्छ्रुत्वा भगवान्विष्णुस्त्वयोक्तं च करोमि वै ॥२८॥
गच्छ शीघ्रमयोध्यां त्वं मा वादीर्नारदस्य वै ।
त्वया मे सम्विदं यच्च तथेत्युक्त्वा जगाम सः ॥२९॥

Hearing this, Lord Vishnu[1] said, 'I will do as you have said. Go to Ayodhya soon and don't tell Narad anything about it' (28½).

Saying that the Lord's orders will be carried out verbatim, the sage quickly went to Ayodhya (to attend the marriage ceremony of Srimati) (29).

ततो राजा समाज्ञाय प्राप्तौ मुनिवरौ तदा ।
माङ्गल्यैर्विविधैर्भद्रैरयोध्यां ध्वजमालिनीम् ॥३०॥
मण्डयामास लाजैश्च पुष्पैश्चैव समन्ततः ।३०½।

The king (Ambarish) saw that both the sages have arrived. Ayodhya had been pleasantly decorated for the occasion from all the sides with various auspicious paraphernalia befitting the royal marriage, such as flags, buntings, standards and festoons (30). It was bedecked with flowers and stems (such as that of the plantain trees) in all the directions (30½). [30-30½]

अभिषिक्तगृहद्वारां सिक्ताङ्गणमहापथाम् ॥३१॥
दिव्यगन्धरसोपेतां धूपितां दिव्यधूपकैः ।
कृत्वा च नगरीं राजा मण्डयामास तां सभाम् ॥३२॥
दिव्यैर्गन्धैस्तथा धूपे रत्नैश्च विविधैस्तथा ।३२½।

The gates and doorways of each household of the city were decorated; avenues were sprinkled with scented and coloured water (31), and divine fragrances and perfumes as well as different types of scents were sprayed on them. The king had got the city, along with the royal court (32), sprayed with divine fragrances, perfumes and scents, and had them beautifully decorated with different gems and jewels (32½). [31-32½]

अलंकृता मणिस्तम्भैर्नानामाल्योपशोभितैः ॥३३॥
पराध्यास्तिरणोपेतैर्दिव्यैर्भद्रासनैर्वृताम् ।
नानाजनसमावेशैर्नरेन्द्रैरभिसंवृताम् ॥३४॥

Jewel-studded pillars were adorned with numerous varieties of garlands, festoons and other types of hangings (33). Excellent seats and mattresses of different qualities and varieties were spread (for all the

guests to sit and relax). Numerous kings and other especially invited guests for the occasion had come and assembled there (34). [33-34]

कृत्वा नृपेन्द्रस्तां कन्यामादाय प्रविवेश ह ।
सर्वाभरणसम्पन्नं श्रीरिवायतलोचना ।।३५।।
करसम्मितमध्याङ्गी पञ्चस्निग्धा शुभानना ।
स्त्रीभिः परिवृता दिव्या श्रीमती संस्थिता सती ।।३६।।

The king entered that august assembly accompanied by the maiden (his daughter)[1]. She was beautifully adorned with all possible ornaments[2]. She resembled Goddess Laxmi with large, beautiful eyes[3] (35); she had a very thin waist (which could literally be clasped by one's fist)[4]; she had a body which was smooth (i.e., had no body hair which was visible) at five places[5]; and she had a charming and enchanting face[6]. She was surrounded by her lady friends[7]. Such a glorious and divine[8] maiden named Srimati[9] came and stood there (at the marriage venue) (36). [35-36]

[1]कन्या, [2]सर्वाभरणसम्पन्नं, [3]श्रीरिवायतलोचना, [4]करसम्मितमध्याङ्गी, [5]पञ्चस्निग्धा, [6]शुभानना, [7]स्त्रीभिः परिवृता, [8]दिव्या, [9]श्रीमती

सभा तु सा भूमिपतेः समृद्धा मणिप्रवेकोत्तमरत्नचित्रा ।
न्यस्तासना माल्यवती सुगन्धा तामन्वयुस्ते सुरराजवर्याः ।।३७।।

That royal court or assembly of the prosperous king (Ambarish) was bedecked with glittering gems and jewels. The girl sat on a seat with a fragrant garland in her hands, and there she resembled the daughter of the king of Gods (i.e., the daughter of Indra) by her divine beauty and majestic charm (37).

अथाययौ ब्रह्मवरात्मजो महान् स्त्रैविद्य वृद्धोभगवान्महात्मा ।
सपर्वतो ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठो महामुनिर्नारद आजगाम ।।३८।।

Just at that time, the great sage Narad —who was the son of Brahma (the creator)[1], who was a great expert in the 3 legendary 'Vidyas' (called Trividya or the three fundamental knowledge that a wise man is expected to have)[2], was elderly[3], was the most exalted soul who was constantly, without break, repeating the name of the Lord God[4], and who was the senior most amongst those who were expert in the knowledge pertaining to the supreme Brahm (called Brahm Vidya)[5]—arrived there along with his companion, sage Parvat[6] (38).

[1]महामुनिर्नारद ब्रह्मवरात्मजो, [2]महान् स्त्रैविद्य, [3]वृद्धो, [4]भगवान्महात्मा, [5]ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठो, [6]सपर्वतो

[Note :- (a) The 'Trividya' is that knowledge which is enshrined in the three Vedas— the Rig, the Sam and the Yajur. This Trividya has been dealt widely in the different Upanishads. See also Canto 25, note to verse no. 120. (b) The 'Brahm Vidya' is the knowledge pertaining to Brahm who is the supreme, transcendental, all pervading, supreme authority of the creation, and from whom the creation has come into being. All the Upanishads target Brahm in their teachings.]

Thus ends Canto 3 of the ancient and glorious epic story of Sri Ram and Sita, called Adbhut Ramayan, describing the arrival of Narad and Parvat in the assembly where the marriage ceremony of king Ambarish's daughter, Srimati, was being head, with a desire to marry her.

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Canto 4
The causes of Sri Ram's incarnation

The two wise sages, Narad and Parvat, went to marry Srimati. The Lord appeared there invisibly and sat between them, disguised as a human. The maiden was stunned and exasperated when she saw the monkey faced sages, and she finally married Lord Vishnu who was in disguise. Frustrated, embarrassed and peeved at being denied the opportunity to marry Srimati, and feeling let down by Vishnu, the sages cursed him that he would become a 2-armed human being, the form he had assumed when he sat between the sages. They also cursed him that he would have to suffer the agony of separation from a woman like these two sages had suffered. The Lord accepted the curse, and in due course of time, manifested himself as Sri Ram in the household of one of the descendants of Ambarish, king Dasrath.

तवागतौ समीक्ष्याथ राजा संभ्रान्तमानसः ।
दिव्यमासनमादिश्य पूजयामास तावुभौ ।।१।।

Seeing them (Narad and Parvat) arrive, the king (Ambarish), with a gentle heart, gave them beautiful and comfortable seats to sit upon. He also worshipped and welcomed them with respect (because they were exalted sages, notwithstanding the fact that they had become overcome by passion and lust) (1).

उभौ देवऋषी दिव्यौ नित्यज्ञानवतां वरौ ।
समासीनौ महात्मानौ कन्यार्थे मुनिसत्तमौ ।।२।।

Those two divine, celestial sages[1], who were infinitely superior in knowledge compared to others[2], and were great[3] and exalted souls[4], sat down on their respective seats with a desire to get that girl in marriage (2).

[1]उभौ देवऋषी दिव्यौ, [2]नित्यज्ञानवतां वरौ, [3]महात्मानौ, [4]मुनिसत्तमौ

[Note :- the adjectives used to describe the sages and the fact that they wished to marry the same girl is used by sage Valmiki to highlight the truth that lust and passion are so blinding that they obscure the wisdom of even the most enlightened of sages. So one must be aware and wary of them.]

तावुभौ प्रणिपत्याग्रे कन्यां तां श्रीमतीं शुभाम् ।
स्थितां कमलपत्राक्षीं प्राह राजा यशस्विनीम् ।।३।।
अनयोर्य वरं भद्रे! मनसा त्वमिहेच्छसि ।
तस्मै मालामिमां देहि प्रणिपत्य यथाविधि ।।४।।

After paying his obeisance to them, the king said to the girl named Srimati, who was lotus-eyed[1] and famous[2] (3), 'Oh lady[3]! Out of these two, whoever you decide to accept (as your groom), bow before him and put the garland around his neck' (4). [3-4]

[1]कमलपत्राक्षीं, [2]यशास्विनीम्, [3]भद्रे

एवमुक्ता तु सा कन्या स्त्रीभिः परिवृता तदा ।
मालां हिरण्मयीं दिव्यामादाय शुभलोचना ।।५।।
यत्रासीनौ महात्मानौ तत्रागम्य स्थिता यदा ।
ईक्षमाना मुनिश्रेष्ठौ नारदं पर्वतं तथा ।।६।।
गोलांगुलमुखं भीता किञ्चिद्धास्य समन्विता ।
सम्भ्रान्तमनसा तत्र प्रवाते कदली यथा ।।७।।
तस्थौ तामाह राजासौ वत्से किं त्वं करिष्यसि ।
अनयोरेकमुद्दिश्य देहि मालामिमां शुभे ।।८।।

When this instruction was given to that auspicious lady with beautiful

eyes[1], she got up politely from her seat, and surrounded or accompanied by her lady friends or maids and holding the beautiful golden garland[2] in her hands (5), she came to the place where the two great sages sat eagerly in anticipation. When she saw those two exalted sages, Narad and Parvat (6), with their monkey-like faces[3], she became scared and stunned, but she was very amused and felt embarrassed[4]. That lady with a clear and pure heart and consciousness[5] stood there dazed, resembling a plantain tree standing in a strong breeze[6]. [That is, just like the leaves of a plantain tree shake in a strongly blowing wind, the girl shivered at the fearful sight of the two monkeys-faced sages and was horrified at the prospect of having to marry any one of them] (7).

The king intervened when he saw that she was indecisive, saying, 'Daughter, what are you doing? Put the garland on one of these two' (8). [5-8]

[1]शुभलोचना, [2]मालां हिरण्मयीं दिव्या, [3]गोलांगुलमुखं, [4]भीता किञ्चिद्धास्य, [5]सम्भ्रान्तमनसा, [6]प्रवाते कदली

सा प्राह पितरं त्रस्ता इमौ तु वानराननौ ।
मुनिश्रेष्ठौ न पश्यामि नारदं पर्वतं तथा ।।९।।
अनयोर्मध्यतस्त्वेकं वरं षोडशवार्षिकम् ।९½।

Getting exasperated[1], she said to her father, 'Their faces are like monkeys! I am not able to see either of those two exalted sages, Narad and Parvat (9). But a handsome and attractive youth of 16 years of age[2] is sitting in their middle[3] (9½). [9-9½]

[1]त्रस्ता, [2]वरं षोडशवार्षिकम्, [3]अनयोर्मध्यतस्त्वेकं

सर्वाभरणसंयुक्तमतसीपुष्पसंनिभम् ।।१०।।
दीर्घबाहुं विशालाक्षं तुङ्गोरःस्थलमुत्तमम् ।
चामीकराभं करणपटयुग्मकशोभितम् ।।११।।
विभक्तत्रिवलीयुक्तनाभिं व्यक्तकृशोदरम् ।
हिरण्याभरणोपेतं सुरङ्गकनखं शुभम् ।।१२।।
पद्माकारकरं त्वेनं पद्मास्यं पद्मलोचनम् ।
पद्मांघ्रिं पद्महृदयं पद्मनाभं श्रियावृतम् ।।१३।।
दंतपंक्तिभिरत्यर्थं कुन्दकुड्मलसन्निभम् ।
हसन्तं मां समालोक्य दक्षिणं च प्रसार्य वै ।।१४।।

पाणिं स्थितमिमं छत्रं पश्यामि शुभमूर्धजम् ।१४½।

That youth is adorned by all the ornaments[1]. He is like the flower of the 'Linseed tree' (called Alsi)[2] (10). He has long arms[3], large eyes[4], a broad and prominent chest[5], a golden radiant complexion[6], wears a two-piece garment[7] (11), has an abdomen with three folds of skin around the navel (i.e., has a muscular abdomen)[8], and a muscular, flat and straight stomach (i.e., he is not pot-bellied)[9]. He is adorned by golden ornaments[10], has beautiful nails[11], and is most auspicious, pleasant, charming, enchanting and bewitching to look at[12] (12). His hands, face, eyes, feet, heart (chest) and navel —all resemble the lotus flower[13]. He is endowed with a glorious and radiant halo of majesty and glory around him[14] (13). His teeth resemble a row of buds of the lily flower[15]. He looks at me with a bewitching and enchanting smile[16]. He has the ceremonial umbrella over his head and has spread his right hand to me (as a gesture of welcome and acceptance)[17]. I can see that he is the only one who has a beautiful, charming, auspicious and pleasant face[18] here in this assembly (14½). [10-14½]

[1]सर्वाभरणसंयुक्त, [2]मतसीपुष्पसंनिभम्, [3]दीर्घबाहु, [4]विशालाक्षं, [5]तुङ्गोर:स्थलमुत्तमम्, [6]चामीकराभं, [7]करणपटयुग्मकशोभितम्, [8]विभक्तत्रिवलीयुक्तनाभिं, [9]व्यक्तकृशोदरम्, [10]हिरण्याभरणोपेतं, [11]सुरङ्गकनखं, [12]शुभम्, [13]पद्माकारकरं, [14]श्रियावृतम्, [15]दंतपंक्तिभिरत्यर्थं कुन्दकुड्मलसन्निभम्, [16]हसन्तं मां समालोक्य, [17]पाणिं स्थितमिमं छत्रं, [18]पश्यामि शुभमूर्धजम्

एवमुक्तो मुनि: प्राह नारद: संशयं गत: ।।१५।।
कियन्तो बाहवस्तस्य कन्ये वद यथातथम् ।१५½।

When Narad heard her say so, he became suspicious and asked her, 'Oh maiden! Tell me the fact; how many armed does he have?' [15-15½]

बाहुद्वयं च पश्यामीत्याह कन्या सुविस्मिता ।।१६।।
प्राह तां पर्वतस्तत्र तस्य वक्ष:स्थले शुभे ।
किञ्च पश्यसि मे ब्रूहि करे किं धारयत्यायि ।।१७।।
कन्या तमाह मालां वै चंचद्रूपामनुत्तमाम् ।
वक्ष:स्थलेऽस्य पश्यामि करे कार्मुकसायकौ ।।१८।।

The maiden replied, 'I see two arms' (16). Then Parvat asked her, 'Oh the auspicious once! What is present on his chest, and what

does he hold in his hands? Look at him carefully and tell me' (17).

The maiden replied that he is wearing a very beautiful garland draped over his chest, and he holds a bow and an arrow in his hands' (18). [16-18]

एवमुक्तौ मुनिश्रेष्ठौ परस्परमनुत्तमौ ।
मनसा चिन्तयन्तौ तौ मायेयं कस्याचिद्भवेत् ।।१९।।
मायावी तस्करो नूनं स्वयमेव जनार्दन: ।१९½।

When she said this, the two sages felt aghast and they wondered what the mystery was. They discussed amongst themselves whose trick it was. They concluded that this cunning trickery has been done by an imposter, and he is surely none other than Janardan (Vishnu) himself (because no one else has these divine features as had been described by Srimati in verse nos. 13-14½, 16 and 18) [19-19½].

आगतो नान्यथा कुर्यात्कथं मेऽन्यो मुखं त्विदम् ।।२०।।
गोलांगूलीयमित्येवं चिन्तयामास नारद: ।
पर्वतोऽपि तथैवैतद्वानरत्वं कथं मया ।।२१।।
प्राप्तमित्येव सहसा चिन्तामापेदिवांस्तथा ।२१½।

'Certainly, he (Vishnu) has come personally. Otherwise, how come our faces have become like a monkey'. Narad thought thus in his mind, and the two of them became very worried and anxious about the prospects of marrying the girl and preventing any catastrophe from happening in a royal assembly which would humiliate and embarass them no end [20-21½].

ततो राजा प्रणम्यासौ नारदं पर्वतं तथा ।।२२।।
भवद्भ्यां किमिदं भद्रौ कृतं बुद्धि विमोहनम्।
स्वस्थौ भवन्तौ तिष्ठेतां यदि कन्यार्थमुद्यतौ ।।२३।।

The king bowed before sages Narad and Parvat and said to them (22), 'Oh gentlemen! What kind of confusion and delusion are you both having? If the girl wishes to marry anyone of you, then at least sit properly and cheerfully, and shed your worrisome and nervous countenance and demeanours. Why do you look so exasperated and nervous?' (23). [22-23]

एवमुक्तौ मुनिश्रेष्ठौ नृपमूचतुरुल्वणौ।
त्वमेव मोहं कुरुषे नावामिह कथञ्चन ।।२४।।
आवयारेकमेषा ते वरयत्वेव भामिनी ।२४½।

When the king said this, the two exalted sages replied to him (in annoyance), 'It is you who has created this dilemma and confusion. We have no confusion or perplexity. Let this girl accept (or choose) any one of us she wishes' (24-24½).

ततः सा कन्यका भूयः प्रणिपत्य च देवताम् ।।२५।।
पित्रा नियुक्ता सहसा मुनिशापभयाद्द्विज ।२५½।

Scared stiff at the prospects of an imminent curse from either of the two sages, the king made the girl bow before his household deity whom the clan worshipped[1] and to try again to make a choice of her groom (25-25½).

[1]प्रणिपत्य च देवताम्

[Note :- These stanzas can be interpreted as follows also— 'The girl was made to bow respectfully before those honourable sages, who have been called Devatas (देवताम्) to show their exalted stature, by the father who was bitterly scared of inviting the wrath of the two sages who were enamoured of the girl and were so infatuated by her that they both wished to marry her. She was inspired by her father to try once again and make a choice of her groom. The fact that the girl could not decide in the first instance about her groom shows that she was in a great dilemma and full of embarrassment and disenchantment when she saw the two sages with monkey faces eyeing her with a desire to marry her'.]

मालामादाय तिष्ठन्ती तयोर्मध्ये समाहिता ।।२६।।
पूर्ववत्पुरुषं दृष्ट्वा माल्ये तस्मै ददौ हि सा ।२६½।

Carefully the girl took the garland in her hands and stood in the middle of the two sages. She once again saw that the 'Purush' (literally meaning a male; but here referring to the gentleman referred to in verse nos. 6½-14½ and 16-18 above; the Purush is Lord Vishnu in a human form —see verse no. 42) was sitting there. So she put the garland around him (or literally gave the victory garland to him) (26-26½).

[Note :- The garland, once put around the neck of the candidate, proved that the would be bride has selected her groom. There were no questions asked as to her choice. In the present case, the girl had selected the Purush, or Lord Vishnu, as her future husband.]

अनन्तरं च सा कन्या दृष्ट्वा न मनुजैः पुनः ।।२७।।
ततो नादः समभवत्किमेतदिति विस्मयात् ।२७½।

Immediately thereafter, no human being could see that maiden (because she had vanished from sight) (27). There was an astonished murmur in the assembly about what a miraculous happening that has just happened (27-27½).

तामादाय गतो विष्णुः स्वस्थानं पुरुषोत्तमः ।।२८।।
पुरा तदर्थमनिशां तपस्तप्त्वा वराङ्गना ।
श्रीमतीयं समुत्पन्ना सा गता च तथा हरिम् ।।२९।।
तावुभौ मुनिशार्दूलौ धिक्त्वामित्येव दुःखितौ ।
वासुदेवं प्रति सदा जग्मतुर्भवनं हरेः ।।३०।।

Lord Vishnu, who is the most exalted and supreme Purush and the male aspect of Nature, called Purushottam, took her with him and went to his abode in the heaven, called Vaikunth (28).

In some ancient time, that beautiful lady, called a 'Varagana'[1], had done some severe Tapa (austerity, penance and keeping of stern religious vows) for being able to attain nearness to Hari (Vishnu). So she was born as Srimati in her present life and ultimately achieved what she had wished in her previous life when she had done severe Tapa, i.e., nearness to Lord Hari or Lord Vishnu (29).

The two most exalted and senior sages (Narad and Parvat)[2] exclaimed in disgust, frustration and embarrassment, 'shame to you'[3], and feeling extremely peeved, annoyed, exasperated, frustrated and anguished[4], they went hurriedly to the abode of Vasudeo (Vishnu) (30). [28-30]

[1]वराङ्गना, [2]मुनिशार्दूलौ, [3]धिक्त्वामित्येव, [4]दुःखितौ

तावागतौ समीक्ष्याह श्रीमतीं भगवान्हरिः ।
मुनि श्रेष्ठौ समायातौ गूढस्वात्मानमत्र वै ।।३१।।
तथेत्युक्ता च सा देवी प्रहसन्ती चकार ह ।३१½।

Lord Hari (Vishnu) said to Srimati when he saw the two sages coming to him, 'Both the exalted sages are coming here angrily and they appear to be frustrated. Hide your true identity, or conceal yourself from view

so that they do not recognise you as Srimati, the lady whom they had wished to marry in their infatuated delusion'[1] (31).

When he said so, the great goddess smiled cheerfully[2] and did as asked (31½). [31-31½]

[1]गूढस्वात्मानमत्र वै, [2]देवी प्रहसन्ती

नारदः प्रणिपत्याग्रे प्राह दामोदरं हरिम् ।।३२।।
किमिदं कृतवानद्य मम त्वं पर्वतस्य च ।
त्वमेव नूनं गोविन्द कन्यां तां हृतवानसि ।।३३।।
तच्छ्रुत्वा पुरुषो विष्णुः पिधाय श्रोत्रमच्युतः ।३३½।

Narad prostrated and bowed before Damodar Hari (one of the names of Vishnu) and said to him (32), 'What kind of form (or face) did you make of me and Parvat? Oh Govind! It is certain that you have tactfully, cunningly and deceitfully stolen or abducted[1] that lady (and have prevented us from marrying her)' (33).

Hearing his words, Purushottam (i.e., the best male in Nature) Vishnu closed his ears with his hands[2] in shock and disbelief. He protested at the insinuative remarks made by Narad (33½). [32-33½]

[1]हृतवानसि, [2]पिधाय श्रोत्रमच्युतः

पाणिभ्यां प्राह भगवन्भवता किमुदीरितम् ।।३४।।
कामवादो न भावोऽयं मुनिवृत्तेरहो किल ।३४½।

'Oh Lord (or the exalted one, or Bhagwan —i.e., sage Narad)! What are you saying? If it is not for an amorous tendency, lustfulness, lasciviousness and passion (collectively called Kaam)[1], then is it a behaviour and desire behooving a pious and great saint like you, who are so exalted, honoured and revered in the world, to make such an insinuating and despicable remark against me[2]?' (34-34½)

[1]कामवादो न, [2]मुनिवृत्तेरहो किल

[Note :- Lord Vishnu sternly admonishes and reproaches Narad for accusing him of stealing a lady because Narad is so overcome with lust and passion that he has almost become blind and does not know what he is saying. For an exalted and pious soul as Narad, to yearn for a lady and expecting her hand in marriage is something unthinkable of and most deplorable. So, Vishnu expresses his astonishment and utter surprise at Narad being overcome with greed and passion.]

एवमुक्तो मुनिः प्राह वासुदेवं स नारदः ।।३५।।
कर्णमूले मम कथं गोलांगूलमुखं त्विति ।३५½।

At this, sage Narad spoke in a low, conspiratorial voice in the ears of Vasudeo (Vishnu), 'You have made my face look like a monkey (and have caused so much embarassment to me in the full assembly)!' (35-35½).

तदाकर्ण्य महाबुद्धिर्देवो नारायणो हरिः ।।३६।।
कर्णमूले तमादेहं वानरास्यं कृतं मया ।
पर्वतस्य तथा विप्र गोलांगूलमुखं तव ।।३७।।
यथा भवांस्तथ सोऽपि प्रार्थयामास निर्जने ।३७½।

Hearing the words of Narad spoken in a confidential tone in his ears[1], the most wise, intelligent and prudent[2] Lord Narayan Hari (Vishnu) (36) replied to him (Narad) in a similar way, i.e., in a low, conspiratorial and confidential manner in his ears[3], 'I made your face look like that of a monkey[4], and oh Brahmin, I have similarly made the face of sage Parvat look like that of a monkey[5]. He (Parvat) had also requested me secretly or privately[6] as you had done. That is, both of you had asked me to make the other one look like a monkey, and both of you are my devotees. So I had to obey the request of both of you. I'm not at fault (37½). [36-37½]

[1]तदाकर्ण्य, [2]महाबुद्धिर्देवो, [3]कर्णमूले, [4]तमादेहं वानरास्यं, [5]गोलांगूलमुखं, [6]प्रार्थयामास निर्जने

मामेवं भक्तिवशगस्तकृथास्म्यकरवं मुने ।।३८।।
न स्वेच्छया कृतं तद्वां प्रियार्थ नान्यथा त्विति ।
याचते यच्च यश्चैव तच्च तस्य ददाम्यहम् ।।३९।।
न दोषोऽत्र गुणो वापि युवयोर्मम वा द्विजः ।३९½।

Oh sage! I am bound by the inviolable bonds of endearments and affection for both of you because you are my sincere devotees and dependant upon me[1]. That is why I did this because I had your welfare in my mind, which is of great concern to me and of paramount importance (38). I have not done it willingly and to humiliate either of you[2], but have done what I did for the sake of your good and welfare[3]. Whatever my devotee asks me or requests me for, I give it to him, or I endeavour to fulfill his desire (39).

In this, there is no fault or virtue of either of us. [That is, you had asked me that Parvat should be monkey-faced, so I made

him look like a monkey, thereby fulfilling your desire. At the same time, ironically, Parvat had also asked me to make you look like a monkey, so I had to obey his commands, because both of you are equal in my eyes and I had to fulfill the desire of both of you. I was helpless in this. So, it is not my fault that both of you looked like monkeys in the assembly. In fact, jealously and passion had got the better of you both!] (39½) [38-39½]

[1]भक्तिवश, [2]न स्वेच्छया कृतं, [3]तद्वां प्रियार्थं

पर्वतोऽपि तथा प्राह तस्याप्येवं जगाद सः ।।४०।।
श्रृण्वतोरुभयोस्तत्र प्राह दामोदरो वचः ।
प्रियं भवतोः कृतवान्सत्येनायुधमालभे ।।४१।।

When Parvat asked him (Vishnu), he repeated the same answer. Then Damodar (Vishnu) addressed both the sages and said, 'I say on oath with truthfulness and my armaments as witness that I have done what was good for both for you' (40-41).

नारदः प्राह धर्मात्मा आवयोर्मध्यतः स्थितः ।
धनुष्मान्द्विभुजःको नु तां हृत्वा गतवान्किल ।।४२।।

Then Narad said, 'Who was that righteous gentleman[1] who was sitting in our midst with a bow and arrow in his hands, and who had stolen or abducted that maiden and went away with her[2]?' (42)

[1]धर्मात्मा, [2]हृत्वा गतवान्किल

तच्छुत्वा वासुदेवोऽसौ प्राह तौ मुनिसत्तमौ ।
मायाविनौ महात्मानौ बहवः सन्ति सत्तमौ ।।४३।।
तत्र सा श्रीमती देवी हृता केनापि सुव्रतौ ।४३½।

Hearing this, Vasudeo (Vishnu) said to the sages, 'Oh exalted sages[1]! There are numerous cunning imposters, cheats and tricksters[2] in this world who cheat even the most wise and erudite people[3] as well as pious saints who are most senior and exalted[4] (43). Oh the keepers of righteous vows (called Suvrato)[5]! Someone amongst them must have stolen or abducted[6] Srimati from the assembly (43½). [43-43½]

[1]मुनिसत्तमौ, [2]मायाविनौ, [3]महात्मानौ, [4]सन्ति सत्तमौ, [5]सुव्रतौ, [6]श्रीमती देवी हृता केनापि

चक्रपाणिरहं नित्यं चतुर्बाहुरिति स्थितिः ।।४४।।
तस्मान्नाहमतथ्यो वै भवद्भ्यांविदितं हि तत् ।४४½।

I always hold a discus[1] and have 4 arms[2]. You are well aware of this form of mine. So, I cannot have been there (because the person you had seen sitting in your midst had 2 arms and held a bow and an arrow —see verse nos. 42)' (44-44½).

[1]चक्रपाणिरहं नित्यं, [2]चतुर्बाहुरिति

इत्युक्तौ प्रणिपत्यैनमूचतुः प्रीतमानसौ ।।४५।।
कोऽत्र दोषस्तव विभो नारायण जगत्पते ।४५½।

When he (Vishnu) said so, the two sages bowed before him and said affectionately[1], 'Oh Narayan, the Lord of the universe[2]! Oh Vibho (i.e., one who is almighty, all powerful, omnipresent, omniscient)[3]! There is no fault on your part in what has happened (45-45½).

[1]प्रीतमानसौ, [2]नारायण जगत्पते, [3]विभो

दौरात्म्यं तु नृपस्यैव मायां हि कृतवानसौ ।।४६।।
इत्युक्त्वा जग्मतुस्तस्मान्मुनि नारदपर्वतौ ।४६½।

Certainly, that king is mischievous and evil[1]. He must have done some trick[2] (in order to prevent us from marrying his daughter)'. Saying this, sages Narad and Parvat went away from there (the heavens) (46-46½).

[1]दौरात्म्यं तु नृपस्यैव, [2]मायां हि कृतवानसौ

अम्बरीषं समासाद्य शापेनैनमयोजयत् ।।४७।।
नारदः पर्वतश्चैव यस्मादावामिहागतौ।
आहूय पश्चादन्यस्मै कन्यां त्वं दत्तवानसि ।।४८।।
मायायोगेन तस्मात्त्वां तमोऽज्ञाभिभविष्यति।
तेन नात्मानत्यर्थं यथावत्त्वं हि वेत्स्यसि ।।४९।।

They went back to king Ambarish and vented their wrath and anger at him in the form of a curse, 'When we, Narad and Parvat, came here at your invitation, then inspite of your words given to us in honour, you had cunningly, mischievously and deceitfully given that maiden (your daughter, Srimati) on the sly[1] to someone else. Hence, you would become ignorant and stupid (i.e., an Agyani)[2]. You will lose the factual awareness of your Atma or your true self[3]. [That is, you will cease to be an enlightened soul worthy of respect and honour, and instead, you would become an ordinary ignorant and foolish human being who indulges in pursuing self gratification and yearns for the perishable comforts and pleasures of this mundane

and artificial world, thereby falling in the whirlpool-like trap of birth and death which has no end and keeps the creature swirling endlessly in its vicious cycle. You will lose your wisdom, erudition and enlightenment for which you are so renowned at present] [47-49].

[1]त्वं दत्तवानसि, [2]तमोऽज्ञाभिभविष्यति, [3]नात्मानत्यर्थं

एवं शापे प्रवृत्तेतु तमोराशि रथोत्थित:।
नृपं प्रति ततश्चकं विष्णो: प्रादुरभूत्क्षणात् ।।५०।।
चक्रवित्रासितं घोरं तावुभावभ्यगात्ताम:।
तत: संत्रस्तसर्वांगौ धावमानौ महामुनी ।।५१।।
पृष्ठतश्चक्रमालोक्य तमोराशिं च दुर्मद्म ।।५१½।

Consequent to this wrathful curse by the sages and inspired by it[1], a dense shadow of darkness[2] appeared there. As soon as that darkness descended and moved towards the king to engulf him from all sides and devour him, the discus which was assigned by Lord Vishnu with the express mandate of protecting the king from any adverse circumstance (see canto 2, verse no. 41-42) (50) intervened on his behalf (to protect the king from the sage's curse). When it (discus) moved towards the darkness that was proceeding swiftly to devour the king, in order to cut through it (i.e., to overcome it and repel it), the darkness got terrified. Thus tormented by the violent and most potent discuss of Lord Vishnu[3], the darkness reverted and pounced back on the two great sages[4].

Seeing that both the horrible darkness and the invincible and unrelenting discus of Vishnu[5] are approaching them menacingly simultaneously, the sages ran away from there as fast as they could (51½). [50-51½]

[4]शापे प्रवृत्तेतु, [2]तमोराशि, [3]चक्रवित्रासितं घोरं, [4]तावुभावभ्यगातम: तत: संत्रस्तसर्वांगौ धावमानौ महामुनी, [5]तमोराशिं च दुर्मद्म

कन्यासिद्धिरहो प्राप्तस्त्यावयोरिति वेगितौ ।।५२।।
लोकालोकतामनिशं धावमानौ तमोऽर्दितौ ।
त्राहि त्राहीति गोविन्दं भाषमाणौ भयार्दितौ ।।५३।।

Exclaiming in exasperation, 'this is how we have been rewarded for desiring that maiden[1]', the two sages regretted and lamented as they kept on running furiously day and night in order to avoid the darkness and the discus[2] which were pursuing them relentlessly

throughout the world wherever they went[3]. Hunted and terrified out of their wits[4], they pleaded urgently, 'Oh Govind (Vishnu)! Save us, save us[5]' (52-53).

[1]कन्यासिद्धिरहो, [2]लोकालोकतामनिशं धावमानौ, [3]तमोऽर्दितौ, [4]भयार्दितौ, [5]त्राहि त्राहीति गोविन्द

विष्णुलोकं ततो गत्वा नारायण जगत्पते।
वासुदेव हृषीकेश पद्मनाभ जनार्दन ।।५४।।
त्राह्मावां पुण्डरीकाक्ष नाथोऽसि पुरुषोत्तम: ।।५४½।

They went to the abode of Vishnu, called Vishnu Loka, and pleaded, 'Oh Narayan, Oh Lord of the world (Jagatpati), oh Vasudeo (i.e., the lord of the 8 Vasus), oh Hrishikesh, oh Padmanabh (i.e., the one whose navel is like a divine lotus, or the one from whose navel the legendary lotus had emerged and from which Brahma, the creator, made his appearance), oh Janardan (i.e., the one who is merciful, compassionate, benevolent and munificent towards his humble devotees and followers) (54), oh Pundariksha (i.e., the lotus-eyed Lord), oh our Lord Purushottam (i.e., the most exalted and best macrocosmic male aspect of creation, the Viraat Purush, Vishnu)! Protect us, save us!' (54-54½).

[Note :- All these names are among the 1000 names of Vishnu. The fact that the sages called him with so many names shows that they were very eager for his protection; they wanted to draw his attention in the quickest possible time. That is why they used as many names as came to their minds so that the Lord will pay attention to at least one of the names being called out.]

इत्युचतुर्वासुदेवं मुनी नारदपर्वतौ।
ततो नारायणोऽचिन्त्य: श्रीमांछ्रीवत्सलक्षण: ।।५५।।
निर्वायं चक्रं ध्वान्तं च भक्तानुग्रहकाम्यया।
अम्बरीषश्च मद्भक्तस्तथेमौ मुनिसत्तमौ ।।५६।।
अनयोर्नृपस्य च तथा हितं कार्यं मया पुन: ।।५६½।

When the sages Narad and Parvat pleaded with the 4-armed Vasudeo (Vishnu)[1], who is in-comprehendible[2], who is known as Narayan[3] and who has the mark of Srivatsa on his chest[4] (55), he immediately forbade the Chakra (his discus) from proceeding any

further (i.e., he deactivated that weapon)[5] with a desire to please and protect his devotees and show mercy on them[6].

He said, 'king Ambarish is my dear and ardent devotee like the both of you. Oh great sages! I have to ensure the good of him as much as I am concerned about the welfare of you two' (56-56½). [55-56½]

[1]चतुर्वासुदेवं, [2]ऽचिन्त्य:, [2]नारायणो, [4]श्रीमांछ्रीवत्सलक्षण:, [5]निर्वायं चक्रं, [6]भक्तानुग्रहकाम्यया

आहूय तौ तत: श्रीमान्गिरा प्रह्लादयन्हरि: ।।५७।।
उवाच भगवान्विष्णु: श्रूयतामिति मे वच:।
क्षमेतां मुनिशार्दूलौ भक्तसंरक्षणाय मे ।।५८।।
अपराद्धं च चक्रेण क्षमाशीला हि साधव: ।५८½।

Then Hari (Vishnu) called them near him and spoke with them in a pleasant, soothing and reassuring voice to assuage their ruffled ego and to reassure them of his continued blessing and patronage for them. Vishnu said, 'Listen to me, oh exalted sages! Excuse me for what I have said for the purpose of protecting my devotee (king Ambarish). It is the fault of this Chakra (discus) that he has been chasing you without any letup, but you must understand that it is merely doing its assigned duty; besides, pious and saintly people are forgiving and tolerant by nature' (57-58½).

ततस्तौ मुनिशार्दूलौ मायां तस्यावबुध्य च ।।५९।।
ददतुश्च तत: शापं विष्णुमुद्दिश्य कोपनौ।
श्रीमतीहरणं विष्णो यत्कृतं छद्मना त्वया ।।६०।।
यया मूर्त्या तथैव त्वं जायेथा: मधुसूदन।
अम्बरीषस्यान्ववाये राज्ञो दशरथस्य हि ।।६१।।
पुत्रस्त्वं भविता पुत्री श्रीमती धरणी प्रजा।
भविष्यति विदेहश्च प्राप्य तां पालयिष्यति ।।६२।।
राक्षसापद: कश्चितां ते भार्या हरिष्यति ।६२½।

Then the two exalted sages realised that it was the delusion and deception caused by the Lord himself[1] (59). Angered and peeved (that the Lord had cheated them on the pretext of doing their good), they cursed him wrathfully[2], 'Oh Vishnu! You have deceitfully and cunningly abducted or stolen[3] Srimati using your deceptive skills (60). Oh Madhusudan! The form (image or body)[4] you had taken or assumed to do the trick (and have deprived us from marrying

that girl), you will have to take birth in the same form[5] in the same clan of Ambarish whose daughter we wished to marry. You will be born in the household of king Dasrath of Ambarish's clan (61) as his son[6]. This Srimati will be the daughter of mother earth[7], and king Videha will find her and bring her up (as his own daughter)[8] (62). An evil and pervert demon will steal your wife in a similar fashion. [That is, since you have assumed a different form then your actual self in order to deceive us and deprive us of the opportunity of marrying and staying close with this girl, that demon will also assume a different form then his real one and steal your wife deceitfully using cunning and trick. You will also have to suffer from the agony of being deprived of a lady whom you love so much and wish to be near, as we have suffered now.] (62½) [59-62½]

[1]मायां तस्यावबुध्य, [2]तत: शापं विष्णुमुद्दिश्य कोपनौ, [3]श्रीमतीहरणं विष्णो यत्कृतं छद्मना, [4]यया मूर्त्या, [5]तथैव त्वं जायेथा:, [6]राज्ञो दशरथस्य हि पुत्रस्त्वं भविता, [7]पुत्री श्रीमती धरणी, [8]विदेहश्च प्राप्य तां पालयिष्यति

यतो राक्षसधर्मेण हृतासि श्रीमती शुभा ।।६३।।
अतस्ते रक्षसा भार्या हर्तव्या छद्मनाऽच्युत।
यथा प्राप्तं महद्दु:खमावाभ्यां श्रीमतीकृते ।।६४।।
हाहेति रुदता लक्ष्यं तथा दु:ख च तत्कृते ।६४½।

The way you had adopted evil method of deceit, impostering and cunning fit for a demon[1] to slyly usurp and abduct the auspicious Srimati[2] (63), your wife will also be abducted or stolen by a evil and fallen demon in a similar fashion using a deceitful form and employing dirty tricks[3]. Even as we two are greatly anguished and grieved[4] because of Srimati (64), you too would roam about in the forest, greatly tormented, and lamenting, weeping and grieving[5] for her' (64½). [63-64½]

[1]राक्षसधर्मेण, [2]हृतासि श्रीमती शुभा, [3]हर्तव्या छद्मनाऽच्चुत, [4]प्राप्तं महद्दु:खमावाभ्यां, [5]हाहेति रुदता दु:ख च तत्कृते

इत्युक्तवन्तौ तौ विप्रौ प्रोवाच मधुसूदन: ।।६५।।
अम्बरीषस्यान्ववाये भविष्यति महायशा: ।
श्रीमान्दशरथो नाम भूमिपालोऽतिधार्मिक: ।।६६।।

When those Brahmins said so (or, cursed Vishnu as above),

Madhusudan (Vishnu) said, 'Sure enough, there shall certainly be a most famous, renowned, majestic, religious and righteous king named Dasrath in the clan of king Ambarish (65-66).

तस्याहमग्रजः पुत्रो रामो नाम भवाम्यहम् ।
तत्र मे दक्षिणो बाहुर्भरतो भविता किल ।।६७।।

I shall manifest myself as his eldest son known as Ram[1]. There, my right arm shall become Bharat (one of my 3 younger brothers)[2] (67).

[1]तस्याहमग्रजः पुत्रो रामो नाम, [2]मे दक्षिणो बाहुर्भरतो भविता

शत्रुघ्नो वामबाहुश्च शेषोऽसौ लक्ष्मणः स्वयम् ।
ऋषिशापो न चैव स्यादन्यथा चक्र गम्यताम् ।।६८।।
ऋषिशापतमोराशे यदा रामो भवाम्यहम्।
तत्र मां समुपागच्छ गच्छेदानीं नृपं विना ।।६९।।

My left arm would become Shatrughan[1] and the legendary Sheshnath (the great mythological multi-hooded python on whose coiled body Vishnu reclines on the legendary ocean of milk called Kshirsagar) will manifest himself as Laxman[2]. In this way, the curse of the sages will not go in vain.' Then Vishnu addressed his Chakra, the discus, 'Oh Chakra! You should come to me[3] (68) at that time when I shall become Ram under the influence of the dark shadow cast upon me by the curse of these sages[4]. Meanwhile, you should go back to the king (Ambarish) to keep protecting him as you have been doing till now' (69). [68-69]

[1]शत्रुघ्नो वामबाहुश्च, [2]शेषोऽसौ लक्ष्मणः स्वयम्, [3]चक्र गम्यताम्, [4]ऋषिशापतमोराशे यदा रामो भवाम्यहम्

त्यक्त्वापि च मुनिश्रेष्ठाविति स्म प्राह माधवः।
एवमुक्ते तमोनाशं तत्क्षणाच्च जगाम वै ।।७०।।
आत्मार्थं सञ्चितं तेन प्रभुणा भक्तरक्षिणा।
निवारितं हरेश्चक्रं यथपूर्वमतिष्ठत ।।७१।।

Cursed and forsaken[1] by those most exalted sages, Madhav (Vishnu) had, for the moment, come under the influence of delusions, and consequentially he was dumbstruck[2]. But as soon as he accepted the curse, the dark shadow of delusions vanished instantly from there (and he regained his prime wisdom) (70). The Lord, who is always eager and diligent in giving protection to his devotees[3], kept

that dark curse reserved for himself[4] (because otherwise the infallible curse would have punished and ruined his ardent and loyal devotee king Ambarish). Freed from its responsibilities, Hari's Chakra (discus)[5] also reverted back to its original place and went back to do his duty to guard Ambarish (71). [70-71]

[1]त्यक्त्वापि, [2]अविति स्म प्राह माधवः, [3]भक्तरक्षिणा, [4]आत्मार्थं सञ्चितं, [5]निवारितं हेरश्चकं

मुनिश्रेष्ठो भयान्मुक्तौ प्रणिपत्य जनार्दनम्।
निर्गतौ शोकसन्तप्तावूचतुस्तौ परस्परम् ।।७२।।
अद्यप्रभृति देहान्तमावां कन्यापरिग्रहम्।
न करिष्याव इत्युक्त्वा प्रतिज्ञाय च तावृषी ।।७३।।

Freed from the horrifying fear of being pursued by their curse and chased from behind by the invincible and formidable killer discus of Vishnu[1], the great sages prostrated before Janardan (Vishnu) and then went away from there. They were overcome with great sorrow and were full of contrition; they were tormented by great anguish and grief[2] (because they had become lustful, were overcome by such denigrating and demeaning qualities as ignorance, delusions and infatuations, and had done the most unimaginable thing that can ever be expected from a holy, pious saint —to angrily curse their own benefactor and Lord, Lord Vishnu). They talked to each other most regretfully (72) and made a stern vow, 'From today onwards till as long as we live[3], we will never ever accept a girl in our lives[4]'. Those sages made a firm resolve in this manner as a token of their repentance for their misdemeanours and fallen integrity (73). [72-73]

[1]भयान्मुक्तौ, [2]शोकसन्तप्ता, [3]अद्यप्रभृति देहान्तमावां, [4]कन्यापरिग्रहम् न करिष्याव

मौनध्यानपरौ शुद्धौ यथापूर्वं व्यवस्थितौ।
अम्बरीषोऽपि राजासौ परिपाल्य च मेदिनीम् ।।७४।।
सभृत्यज्ञातिसम्बन्धो विष्णुलोकं जगाम वै ।।७४½।

Those two sages went back and sat silently in deep meditation as they used to the earlier. Meanwhile, king Ambarish also reigned over his kingdom dutifully and took good care of his subjects (74).

When the appropriate time came (i.e., at the time of his death), he went to the abode of Vishnu, called Vishnu Loka, along with his ministers, councilors, elders, wise ones and attendants (74½). [74-74½]

मानार्थमम्बरीषस्य तथैव मुनिसिंहयोः ।।७५।।
रामो दाशरथिर्भूत्वा तमसा लुप्तबुद्धिकः।
कदाचित्कार्यवशतः स्मृतिः स्यादात्मनः प्रभोः ।।७६।।

For the sake of Ambarish and to keep the honour[1] of those sages who were like lion amongst their peers (i.e., were so exalted that they were like a king among other sages even as a lion is a king of animals)[2], he (Vishnu) became the son of Dasrath. He was then called Ram[3]. The Lord became enveloped in the veil of 'Tam' (the qualities representing darkness caused by worldly ignorance and delusions)[4], and his supreme wisdom and enlightenment were eclipsed[5]. [That is why Vishnu, the Supreme Being and Lord of the universe, behaved like an ordinary human being when he assumed the form of Sri Ram.] But on occasions, the Lord remembered the divine cause for which he had manifested himself as Sri Ram[6] (75-76).

[1]मानार्थमम्बरीषस्य, [2]मुनिसिंहयोः, [3]रामो दाशरथिर्भूत्वा, [4]तमसा, [5]लुप्तबुद्धिकः, [6]कदाचित्कार्यवशतः

पूर्णार्थोऽपि महाबाहुरपूर्णार्थ इव प्रभु।
अनुग्रहाय भक्तानां प्रभूणामीदृशी गतिः ।।७७।।

The Lord, who is renowned for the great potent, strength and valour of his arms[1], appeared to be incomplete (i.e., he appeared to lack the wholesome divinity and characteristic features of the complete Brahm when he manifested himself in a human form as Ram, the son of Dasrath, on this earth)[2], though his primary form was complete and wholesome in every respect[3]. It is for the benefit and upon the request of his devotees and ardent followers[4] that their Lord came to such a humble state[5] (77).

[1]महाबाहु, [2]रपूर्णार्थ इव, [3]पूर्णार्थोऽपि, [4]अनुग्रहाय भक्तानां, [5]प्रभूणामीदृशी गतिः

मायां कृत्वा महेशस्य प्रोत्थिता मानुषी तनुः।
तस्मान्माया न कर्तव्या विद्वद्भिर्दोषदर्शिभिः ।।७८।।

The great and supreme Lord of the Gods called Mahesh (literally meaning the 'great God'; here meaning Vishnu and not Shiva, though the word Mahesh is generally used to denote the latter)[1] had to take the gross form of a human being because he had taken recourse to Maya (which is equivalent to using tricks, conceit, deceit,

imposterings, cunning, scheming, illusions, delusions, deception and maverism in order to achieve a specific goal)[2]. That is why, those wise, erudite, sagacious and scholarly persons[3] who are well aware of the different faults in the characters and behaviours, the thinking processes and actions that a man takes in this world[4], should never get involved in such deeds or actions that involve Maya (i.e., they should never adopt Maya or take recourse to deceit, conceit, deception, cunning and imposterings in any of their activities and behaviours in this world, because if they do so they would be downgraded to a lowly stature even as the supreme Lord of the universe, Vishnu, was forced to become a human being simply because he used tricks upon his own devotees, sages Parvat and Narad, though that trick was meant for their welfare and it had to be used in order to protect his devotee Ambarish from the curse and wrath of the sages)[5] (78).

[1]महेशस्य, [2]मायां कृत्वा, [3]विद्वद्भि, दोंषदर्शिभिः, [5]तस्मान्माया न कर्तव्या

एतत्ते कथितं सर्व रामजन्मकथाश्रयम्।
अम्बरीषस्य माहात्म्यं मायावित्त्वं च वै हरेः ।।७९।।

In this way, I (Valmiki) have described to you (Bharadwaj) the causes for Sri Ram's birth (or incarnation of Vishnu in a human for as Sri Ram) besides the great glory of Ambarish and the illusionary form that Hari (Vishnu) had taken (to protect the king and secure the welfare of his devotees, sages Parvat and Narad, by preventing them from falling prey to lust and passions) (79).

[Note :- The 'illusionary form of Hari' refers to— (a) his invisible form which had two arms when he sat between the sages, Narad and Parvat, and was seen only by Srimati and was invisible to the two sages, and (b) the Lord's human form as Sri Ram. Verse nos. 76-77 clearly states that Sri Ram was veiled under the shadow of 'incompleteness' as compared to his true 'complete and holistic' identity as Vishnu. This 'incompleteness' created an illusion that Sri Ram was an ordinary prince and not the divine Lord that he actually was. The sage emphasises the fact that since Vishnu had assumed a human form and was under the influence of Maya, he made certain errors, though that error was done willingly,

to stress the point that every human being, no matter how divine, holy, saintly and pious he is, is bound to make mistakes because of the fact that every human being is under the influence of Maya, small or big. The point is to accept one's faults and failings and try to overcome them instead of feigning ignorance about one's shortcomings and pretending to be perfect, which no human being is.]

यः पठेच्छृणुयाद्वापि मायावित्त्वं हेरर्विभोः।
मायां विसृज्य पुण्यात्मा विष्णुलोकं स गच्छति ।।८०।।

A person who reads, studies and attentively listens to the maverick tricks and illusions created[1] by the almighty, majestic, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and supreme Lord Hari[2], becomes a sinless and a righteous soul[3]. He forsakes Maya[4] (because he has seen or understood its horrifying and denigrating effects), and upon death he goes to the abode of Lord Vishnu himself (i.e., a person who has realised the pitfalls of coming under the influence of Maya and therefore avoids it, shall find liberation and deliberation from this mundane world full of delusions and deceptions)[5] (80).

[1]मायावित्त्वं, [2]हेरर्विभोः, [3]पुण्यात्मा, [4]मायां विसृज्य, [5]विष्णुलोकं स गच्छति

दशरथसुत जन्मकारणं यः पठति श्रृणोत्यनुमोदते द्विजेन्द्रः।
व्रजति सभगवद्गृहातिथित्वं नहि शमनस्य भवं कृतश्चिदस्य ।।८१।।

A person who reads, studies, hears attentively and tries to correctly understand[1] the episodes relating to the causes of the birth of Sri Ram as the son of Dasrath in the correct perspective, is regarded as a 'Indra' or a king amongst the wise and elderly ones[2], becomes a guest in the divine abode of the Lord God called Bhagwan[3], and has not to fear from death and decay (i.e., he becomes immortal and fearless)[4] (81).

[1]पठति श्रृणोत्यनुमोदते, [2]द्विजेन्द्रः, [3]सभगवद्गृहातिथत्वं, [4]नहि शमनस्य भवं

[Note :- The two sages were so infatuated and overcome with passion and lust that they didn't think twice before requesting Vishnu to make the other one look like a monkey (Canto 3, verse nos. 22 and 27). Not only this, they had even asked that this form should be visible to the bride-to-be and to no one else. 'Fine', said the Lord, and that is why the sages couldn't see the Lord (Vishnu) sitting between them

and had to ask the girl to describe his features for them, because she was the only person who could see the truth (Canto 4, verse nos. 10-18). The Lord, in effect, gave the two sages a taste of their own medicine.

Further, the sages were so deluded and deceived by Maya that they became angry and cursing, a trait which is an absolute no-no in spiritual pursuits and is totally unbecoming and un-behooving of sages and saints of the stature of Parvat and Narad. Such is the effect of passions and delusion that Maya creates that they had the temerity to curse even their patron Lord who was their only benefactor and Lord. The Lord, on the other hand, comes out shining in his splendorous and immaculate and benevolent character —because all that he did, even the use of tricks and cunning that he had to employ and the sufferings he had to undergo as a human being as a consequence of the curses which the sages had heaped on him while the Lord was only trying to prevent his devotee Ambarish from getting cursed by the two sages and, at the same time, ensuring that the two sages did not fall prey to passions and lust —were for two basic reasons, viz., (a) he had to protect the life and integrity of the righteous king Ambarish who was not at fault at all, and (b) to prevent the two exalted and enlightened sages from being trapped by the entangling web of Maya and its accompanying denigrating effects, such as lust and passions for fulfilling carnal desires as well as sensual gratification. The Lord had amply made this clear in Canto 4, verse no. 56-58½.

This Canto emphasises that emancipation and salvation are possible for only those souls who keep away from Maya and its attendant faults and misdemeanours (verse no. 78½-80).]

Thus ends Canto 4 of the epic Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the causes of Sri Ram's birth.

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Canto 5
Kaushik and other devotees find succour and residence in the abode of Lord Vishnu

This Canto describes how sages Kaushik and other ardent and sincere devotees of Lord Vishnu attained an eternal abode in the heavens where the Lord resides. These devotees used to sing the glories of Lord Vishnu and had taken a stern vow that they would sing and hear only the glories of the Lord and nothing else. Once, they were put under great pressure to sing laurels and laud the worldly glories and majesties of a king named Kalingraj, to which they bluntly refused. Fearing the king's wrath and forced by him, they voluntarily pierced their tongues to become dumb, instead of submitting to his desire of singing his glories instead of the glories of Lord Vishnu. Angered at their temerity in refusing to sing the king's glories and annoyed by their defiance, the king banished them from his kingdom. The sages headed north (towards the Himalayas). They died in due course and were welcomed by Brahma, the creator, himself who took them to Lord Vishnu. The Lord too welcomed them, praised and honoured them, and gave them eternal residence in his abode.

भरद्वाज श्रृणुष्वाथ सीताजन्मनि कारणम् ।
पुरा त्रेतायुगे कश्चित्कौशिको नाम वै द्विजः ।।१।।

Oh Bharadwaj! Now listen to the reason why Sita took birth on this earth. In some ancient time, during the era called 'Treta', there was a Brahmin named Kaushik (1).

[Note :- In Hindu mythology, there are 4 eras, called Yugs, which complete one cycle of creation. These 4 Yugs are the following— Sat, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. Sri Ram was born in the 2nd Yug called Treta, while Lord Krishna was born in the 3rd Yug called Dwapar. The present era is known as Kaliyug.]

वासुदेवपरो नित्यं नामगानरतः सदा।
भोजनासनशय्यासु सदा तद्गतमानसः।
उदारचरितं विष्णोर्गायमानः पुनः पुनः ।।२।।

He was very committed to Vasudeo (Vishnu). He was always engrossed in chanting the holy name of the Lord[1] to such an extent that at all times —while eating, while sitting and while sleeping[2] — his mind was fixed on the Lord. He repeatedly and incessantly[3] sang the magnanimous, generous and gracious glorious stories pertaining to Lord Vishnu[4] (2).

[1]नित्यं नामगानरतः सदा, [2]भोजनासनशय्यासु सदा, [3]पुनः पुनः, [4]उदारचरितं विष्णोर्गायमानः

विष्णुस्थलं समासाद्य हरेः क्षेत्रमनुत्तमम् ।
अगायत हरिं तत्र तालवल्गुलयान्वितम् ।।३।।
मूर्च्छनामूर्च्छायोगेन श्रुतिमण्डलवेदितम् ।
भक्तियोगसमापन्नो भिक्षामश्नाति तत्र वै ।।४।।

He came to the best and holy places where Vishnu was worshipped[1] and which were the realms of Lord Hari[2]. There he sang the glories of Hari (Vishnu) in a melodious, enchanting tune and rhythm (3). He roamed from village to village, singing the melodious glories of the Lord using all the seven notes of Indian classical music, first in an ascending order and then in a descending one[3]. Sometimes he fainted or obtained a state of unconsciousness[4] obtained by ascetics who are lost in the thought of the Lord. [That is, often he fainted in ecstasy and obtained the state of supreme blissfulness which exalted hermits and sages and ascetic obtained while they were doing meditation.] At other times, he sang in a loud, articulate, resonating, cheerful and clearly audible voice[5]. He had indeed attained the exalted state obtained by sincere devotion for the Lord, a state known as Bhakti[6]. He ate only by begging (and lived a life like a true renunciate fryer or a mendicant ascetic)[7] (4). [3-4]

[1]विष्णुस्थलं, [2]हरेः क्षेत्रमनुत्तमम्, [3]मूर्च्छना, [4]मूर्च्छायोगेन, [5]श्रुतिमण्डलवेदितम्, [6]भक्तियोगसमापन्नो, [7]भिक्षामश्नाति तत्र वै

[Note :- (i) Vishnu's place and Hari's realm refer to temples and its precincts, pilgrim sites etc. where Vishnu or Hari was worshipped. It also refers to villages, hamlets and country where the Lord was honoured. (ii) The 7 notes of Indian classical music are the following— Sa, Re, Gaa, Maa, Pa, Dha, Ni.]

तत्रैनं गायमानं च दृष्ट्वा कश्चिद्द्विजस्तदा ।
पद्माक्ष इत विख्यातस्तस्मै चान्नं ददौ सदा ।।५।।

A Brahmin named Padmaksha saw him singing in ecstasy, and gave him a lot of food to eat (5).

सकूटुम्बो महातेजा अश्नन्नन्नं च तस्य वै ।
कौशिको तदा हृष्टो गायन्नास्ते हरि प्रभुम् ।।६।।

That glorious devotee (Kaushik) put up at the place of Padmaksha. The latter ate the consecrated food (i.e., the food that was left over after it was offered to Kaushik) along with is kith and kin. Kaushik spent his time joyously singing the glorious of the Lord Hari, full of ecstasy and in exhilaration (6).

श्रृण्वन्नास्ते स पद्माक्षः काले काले च भक्तितः।
कालयोगेन सम्प्राप्ताः शिष्या वै कौशिकस्य च ।।७।।

The householder Padmaksha used to hear his devotional singing from time to time, and in due course of time he became Kaushik's disciple (7).

सप्तराजन्यवैश्यानां विप्राणां कुलसम्भवाः।
ज्ञानविद्याधिका शुद्धा वासुदेवपरायणाः ।।८।।
तेषामपि तथान्नाद्यं पद्माक्षः प्रददौ स्वयम्।
शिष्यैश्च सहितो नित्यं कौशिको हृष्टमानसः ।।९।।

Seven other persons born in the Kshatriya (the warrior class), Vaishya (the trading class) and Brahmin (the teacher and wise class of people) families also were inspired by Kaushik's devotion and they became initiated by him. They too became wise and enlightned[1] and managed to clean their hearts[2]. They also became diligent and ardent devotees of Lord Vasudeo (Vishnu)[3] (8).

Padmaksha provided them with food along with Kaushik. Kaushik remained happy and cheerful[4] along with his new disciples (9). [8-9]

[1]ज्ञानविद्याधिका, [2]शुद्धा, [3]वासुदेवपरायणाः, [4]हृष्टमानसः

[Note :- The name of these 7 persons who became Kaushik's disciples are given in verse nos. 18-19½ below.]

विष्णुस्थले हरिं तत्र आस्ते गायन्यथाविधि ।
तत्रैव मालवो नाम वैद्यो विष्णुपरायणः ।।१०।।
दीपमालां हरेर्नित्यं करोति प्रीतमानसः ।
मालतीनाम भार्यासीत्तस्य नित्यं पतिव्रता ।।११।।

गोमयेन समालिप्य हरेः क्षेत्रं समन्ततः ।
भर्त्रा सहास्ते सम्प्रीता श्रृण्वती गानमुत्तमम् ।।१२।।

In the place of Vishnu[1] (see note to verse nos. 3-4) where Kaushik lived at that time, there was another medicine man, known as a Vaidya, by the name of Malav[2] who was also an ardent devotee of Vishnu[3] (10).

He used to light a number of lamps in the name of the Lord[4] and sang the glories of Hari regularly[5] with devotion, sincerity and an exhilarated mind[6]. He had a chaste and loyal wife named Malti[7] (11).

She used to look after the upkeep of the precincts where Hari was worshipped (i.e., the temple area)[8] and plastered the place daily with a paste made from cow dung[9]. She used to hear the excellent devotional songs[10] being sung by her husband and lived a cheerful life[11] (12). [10-12]

[1]विष्णुस्थले, [2]मालवो नाम वैद्यो, [3]विष्णुपरायणः, [4]दीपमालां, [5]हरेर्नित्यं करोति, [6]प्रीतमानसः, [7]भार्या पतिव्रता मालतीनाम, [8]हरेः क्षेत्रं, [9]गोमयेन समालिप्य, [10]श्रृण्वती गानमुत्तमम्, [11]सम्प्रीता

कुशस्थलीसमुत्पन्ना ब्राह्मणाः शंसितव्रताः।
पञ्चाशद्वै समापन्ना हरेर्गानार्थमुत्तमा ।।१३।।

Once, 50 Brahmins[1], born at hermitages[2] and who kept religious vows[3], came to that place to sing devotional songs and glories of Hari[4]. [That is, a group of Brahmacharis came there to sing devotional songs in a community of saints, a system called 'singing Kirtan' wherein devotional songs are sung in unison and in chorus accompanied by simple musical instruments] (13).

[1]पञ्चाशद्वै, [2]कुशस्थलीसमुत्पन्ना, [3]शंसितव्रताः, [4]हरेर्गानार्थमुत्तमा

साधयन्तो हि कार्याणि कौशिकस्य महात्मनः।
ज्ञानविद्यार्थतत्त्वज्ञाः श्रृण्वन्तौ ह्यवसंस्तु ते ।।१४।।

Those saints stayed there, serving the great soul Kaushik. They intended to acquire the sublime and subtle knowledge about the essential Truth and absolute Reality (i.e., they wished to learn about Brahm, Atma, creature, their interrelationship, and the truthful knowledge contained in the scriptures sans its dogmas and rituals)[1]. For the purpose, they attentively heard what Kaushik said or

preached[2] (14).

[1]ज्ञानविद्यार्थतत्त्वज्ञा:, [2]श्रृण्वन्तौ ह्यवसंस्तु

ख्यातमासीत्तदा तस्य गानं वै कौशिकस्य च ।
श्रुत्वा राजा समभ्येत्य कालिङ्गो वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।।१५।।
कौशिकाद्यगणै: सार्धं गायस्वेह च मां पुन: ।
शृणुध्वं च तथा यूयं कुशस्थलजना अपि ।।१६।।

The fame of Kaushik's devotional singing and erudition spread far and wide. When the king of Kaling[1] (present day state of Orissa in eastern India) heard about it, he issued a royal edict and ordered (15), 'Kaushik shall sing my laurels and laud my majesty and glory[2] along with his disciples[3]. And you Brahmins who live in thatched huts (or in hermitages)[4] must listen to it[5]' (16). [15-16]

[1]राजा कालिङ्गो, [2]गायस्वेह च मां, [3]कौशिकाद्यगणै: सार्धं, [4]कुशस्थलजना, [5]शृणुध्वं च

तच्छ्रुत्वा कौशिक: प्राह राजानं सां त्वयन्गिरा।
न जिह्वाग्रे महाराज वाणी च मम सर्वदा ।।१७।।
हरेरन्यमपीन्द्रं वा स्तौति नापि न वक्ति च ।१७½।

Hearing this royal order, Kaushik tried to explain the situation to the king most politely. He said, 'My tongue cannot ever pronounce[1] the word 'great king or Maharaj'[2] (17). What else, my voice has no interest in even praising the king of Gods, Indra[3]. My tongue and voice can praise no one else except Lord Hari'[4] (17½). [17-17½]

[1]न जिह्वाग्रे च सर्वदा, [2]महाराज वाणी, [3]हरेरन्यमपीन्द्रं नापि न वक्ति च

एवमुक्ते च तच्छिष्या वसिष्ठो गौतमोऽरुणि: ।।१८।।
सारस्वतस्तथा वैश्यश्चित्रमालस्तथा शिशु: ।
ऊचुस्तं पार्थिवं तत्त्वं यथा प्राह स कौशिक: ।।१९।।

His disciples named Vashistha, Gautam, Aruni, Saraswat Vaishya, Chitramala and Sishu conveyed what Kaushik had said to the king (18-19).

[Note :- By reading verse nos. 17-19 together we come to the conclusion that Kaushik stayed in the realm of the king of Kaling. When the king heard that there was an expert singer in his realm, he summoned him to sing his glories, as the kings were used to hearing their own glories being sung by bards and minstrels. Since Kaushik was a senior teacher, the orders of the king were taken to his hermitage by the king's messengers. When Kaushik heard the orders of the king, he politely refused to sing his glories, because for him the only king was Lord Vishnu. His decision was conveyed to the king by his disciples listed in verse nos. 18-19 on his behalf.]

श्रीकराश्च तथा प्रोचु: पार्थिवं विष्णुतत्परा: ।
श्रोत्राणीमानि शृण्वन्तिहरेरन्यं न पार्थिवम् ।।२०।।
मा ते कीर्तिं वयं तस्माच्छृणुमो नैव वा स्तुतिम् ।२०½।

Even Srikar (the 7th disciple) joined the others and said to the king, 'We are ardent and faithful devotees of Lord Vishnu. Our ears hear the glories of Hari and nothing else (20). That is why we cannot hear either your 'Stuti'[1] (i.e., your praises and eulogies) or your 'Kirti'[2] (i.e., your glorious deeds, your fames, your virtues) being lauded or sung by our ears' (20½). [20-20½]

[1]नैव वा स्तुतिम्, [2]ते कीर्तिं,

तच्छ्रुत्वा पार्थिवो रुष्टो गीयतामिति चाब्रवीत् ।।२१।।
स्वभृत्यान्ब्राह्मणा ह्येते कीर्तिं श्रृण्वन्ति वै यथा।
न शृण्वन्ति कथं तस्माद्गीयमानं समन्तत: ।।२२।।

The king was very angry, annoyed and peeved. He asked his minstrels and royal bards to sing his glories. He asked in wonderment, 'Why can't these Brahmins listen to my glories being sung if they can hear those of Hari?' (21-22).

[Note :- The king asked his royal bards and minstrels to sing his eulogies in order to force the 7 sages to hear his praises being sung in order to impose upon them his will. This was to counter the sages' claim that they cannot hear anything except the glories of Lord Hari.]

एवमुक्तास्ततो भृत्या जगु: पार्थिवसत्तमम् ।
निरुद्धकर्णा विप्रास्ते गाने वृत्ते सुदु:खिता: ।।२३।।
काष्ठशंकुभिरन्योन्यं श्रोत्राणि बिभिदु: किल ।
कौशिकाद्यास्तु तां ज्ञात्वा मनोवृत्तिं नृपस्य वै ।।२४।।
निर्बन्धं कुरुते कस्मात्स्वगानेऽसौ नृप: स्थिरम् ।
इत्युक्त्वा ते सुनियता जिह्वाग्रं चिच्छिदु: स्वकम् ।।२५।।

On the orders of the king, his minstrels and bards began to sing and laud his laurels and glories. The Brahmins felts very anguished and

tormented at being forced under duress to hear the praises of the king. So they closed their ears against those songs lauding the king's glories (23).

Greatly annoyed and feeling insulted and embarrassed, the king desired to get their ears pierced with iron nails[1]. Becoming aware of the king's pervert and cruel intentions (24), Kaushik and other sages wondered in amazement why the king was so insistent and adamant in getting his own glories sung[2]. Fearing that the king will use coercion and torture to compel them to sing his glories, the sages voluntarily pierced the tips of their tongues[3] (so that they will become dumb and cannot be forced by the king to sing his glories) (25). [23-25]

[1]श्रोत्राणि बिभिदुः किल, [2]कस्मात्स्वगानेऽसौ, [3]जिह्वाग्रं चिच्छिदुः स्वकम्

ततो राजा सुसंक्रुद्धः स्वदेशात्तान्व्यवासयत् ।
आदाय वित्तं सर्वेषां ततस्ते जग्मुरुत्तराम् ।।२६।।

The king lost his cool and became extremely angry. He exiled them from his kingdom[1] and forfeited the little property that the sages had (such as their cattle, huts and meager belongings such as cooking utensils)[2]. Then the sages proceeded in the northern direction from there[3] (26).

[1]स्वदेशात्तान्व्यवासयत्, [2]आदाय वित्तं सर्वेषां, [3]जग्मुरुत्तराम्

दिशामासाद्य कालेन कालधर्मेण योजिताः ।
तानागतान्यमो दृष्ट्वा किंकर्तव्यमिति स्म ह ।।२७।।

In due course of time, when their end (death) approached, Kaal (the death God) saw them and wondered what he should do with them (27).

विस्मितस्तत्क्षणे विप्र ब्रह्मा प्राह सुराधिपान् ।
कौशिकादीन्द्विजानद्य वासुदेवपरायणान् ।।२८।।
गानयोगेन ये नित्यं पूजयन्ति जनार्दनम् ।
तानादाय भद्रं वो यदि देवत्वमिच्छथ ।।२९।।

Seeing him confused and perplexed[1], Brahma, the creator, said to the Gods at that time— 'Kaushik and other sages are committed to and are ardent devotees of Vasudeo (Vishnu)[2] (28). They worship, adore and honour Janardan (the Lord who is munificent, benevolent and compassionate towards his devotees and followers as well as the rest

of the subjects of the creation)[3] by regularly singing devotional songs in his honour[4]. If they have the desire to attain the stature of Gods[5] (i.e., if they wish to come to heaven and become immortal like the Gods), then go and bring them here' (29). [28-29]

[1]विस्मित, [2]वासुदेवपरायणान्, [3]पूजयन्ति जनार्दनम्, [4]गानयोगेन ये नित्यं, [5]देवत्वमिच्छथ

इत्युक्त्वा लोकपालास्ते कौशिकेति पुनः पुनः।
मालतीति तया केचित्पद्माक्षेति तथापरे ।।३०।।
क्रोशमानाः समभ्येत्य तानादाय विहायसा ।
ब्रह्मलोकं गताः शीघ्र मुहूर्तार्द्धेन वै सुराः ।।३१।।

On his (Brahmaa's) instructions, the Gods called out repeatedly, 'Oh Kaushik, oh Malti, oh Padmaksha'. The Gods took the group to the abode of Brahma in a very short time (literally, in half a Muhurt, or half of 1 hour 48 minutes = 54 minutes approximately)[1] (30-31).

कौशिकादींस्तथा दृष्ट्वा ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः।
प्रत्यागम्य यथान्यायं स्वागतेनाभ्यपूजयत् ।।३२।।

Seeing Kaushik and others arrive in the heavens, the patriarch and grandfather of creation, Brahma[1], duly welcomed them by honouring and worshipping them (32).

[1]ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः

ततः कोलाहलश्चाभूदतिगौरवमुल्बणम् ।
ब्रह्मणा च कृतं दृष्ट्वा देवानां द्विजसत्तम ।।३३।।

Watching those exalted Brahmins[1] being given great honour, respect and being worshipped by Brahma himself[2], there was a great turmoil amongst the Gods[3] (because the Gods were absolutely amazed at the show of reverence to humans by none other than the creator himself, especially since the Gods are known for being over jealous and selfish) (33).

हिरण्यगर्भो भगवांस्तान्निवार्य सुरोत्तमान् ।
कौशिकादींस्तदादाय मुनिर्देवैः समावृत्तः ।।३४।।
विष्णुलोकं ययौ शीघ्रं वासुदेवपरायणः ।३४½।

Lord Hiranyagarbh (Brahma) dispelled the doubts in the mind of the Gods and reassured them. Then, taking Kaushik and other sages with him and surrounded by the Gods themselves (34), all those devotees of Vasudeo went to the abode of Vishnu in Vishnu

Loka (34½). [34-34½]

तत्र नारायणो देव: श्वेतद्वीपनिवासिभि: ।।३५।।
ज्ञानयोगेश्वरै: सिद्धैर्विष्णुभक्तिपरायणै: ।
नारायणसमैर्दिव्यैश्चतुर्बाहुधरै: शुभै: ।।३६।।

There, Lord Narayan (Vishnu) was present. The Gods[1], the residents of 'Shwet-dwip' (literally, the white continent)[2] (35), those ascetics who were prominent amongst those who were wise, erudite, sagacious, scholarly and enlightened ones[3], and Siddhas (those exalted person who possessed special mystical powers)[4] who were great and sincere devotees of Vishnu[5] —all of them were present there. The auspicious Narayan[6] had a divine and holy form with 4 arms[7] (36). [35-36]

[1]देव:, [2]श्वेतद्वीपनिवासिभि:, [3]ज्ञानयोगेश्वरै:, [4]सिद्धै, [5]र्विष्णुभक्तिपरायणै:, [6]नारायण शुभै:, [7]र्दिव्यैश्चतुर्बाहुधरै:

[Note :- The 'inhabitants of the white continent' perhaps refers to the European race or those areas of the earth which are usually covered with snow, or those people who have a fair skin as opposed to those with a dark skin.]

विष्णुचिह्नसमापन्नैर्दीप्यमानैरकल्मषै: ।
अष्टाशीतिसहस्रैस्तु सेव्यमानो मनोजवै: ।।३७।।

Lord Vishnu had all the signs which are his exclusive emblems[1]. He was radiant, glorious and illuminated by a divine halo that surrounded him[2]. He was pristine pure, immaculate and untarnished by any faults of creation[3]. He was being served by 28,000 great souls who had self restraint, or who had vanquished their minds[4] (37).

[1]विष्णुचिह्न, [2]दीप्यमान, [3]रकल्मषै:, [4]अष्टाशीतिसहस्रैस्तु मनोजवै:

[Note :- The signs of Vishnu referred to above are the following— (i) the discus— Chakra, (ii) the lotus— Padama, (iii) the conch— Shankha, and (iv) the mace— Gada.]

अस्माभिर्नारदाद्यैश्च सनकाद्यैरकल्मषै: ।
भूतैर्नानाविधैश्चैव दिव्यस्त्रीभि: समन्तत: ।।३८।।

He was being served by so many great sages like us (Valmiki and Bharadwaj)[1], including sages Narad and Sankadi as well as others who were faultless and sinless sages[2]. Besides them, different categories of creatures[3] and all the divine glories, majesties,

magnificence and good virtues in creation[4] had assumed divine forms and had also collected around the Lord to serve him (38).

[1]अस्माभि, [2]सनकाद्यैरकल्मषै:, [3]भूतैर्नानाविधै, [4]दिव्यस्त्रीभि:

सेव्यमानोऽथ मध्ये वै सहस्रद्वारसंवृत्ते ।
सहस्रयोजनायामे दिव्ये मणिमये शुभे ।।३९।।
विमाने विमले चित्रे भद्रपीठासने हरि: ।
लोककार्यप्रसक्तानां दत्त्वा दृष्टिं समास्थित: ।।४०।।

[These two verses describe the throne and the Lord's court in heaven.] He was being served by them all in a palace which had a thousand doors[1] and was so huge that it covered 1000 Yojans in area[2]. [1 Yojan = approx 8 miles.] The auspicious throne[3] upon which Vishnu sat was studded with beautiful and glittering gems[4]. It was decorated with charming paintings, engravings and embossing[5]. Lord Hari was majestically seated on this throne. His sight was fixed on those people who were involved in doing good to others (i.e., the Lord was very careful in taking care of those who were involved in doing charity and looking after other creatures of the creation)[6] (39-40).

[1]सहस्रद्वारसंवृत्ते, [2]सहस्रयोजनायामे, [3]शुभे विमाने, [4]दिव्ये मणिमये, [5]विमले चित्रे, [6]लोककार्यप्रसक्तानां दत्त्वा दृष्टिं

तस्मिन्कालेऽथ भगवान्कौशिकाद्यैश्च संवृत्त: ।
आगम्य प्रणिपत्याग्रे तुष्टाव गरुड़ध्वजम् ।।४१।।

At that time, Lord Brahma came there accompanied by Kaushik, other sages and Gods. He bowed before the Lord (Vishnu) whose standard had the mark or insignia of Garud (the legendary eagle or heron), on it. Brahma said prayers in the Lord's honour (41).

ततोऽवलोक्य भगवान्हरिनारायण: प्रभु: ।
कौशिकेत्याह सम्प्रीत्या तान्सर्वांश्च यथाक्रमम् ।।४२।।

Lord Narayan Hari (Vishnu) saw them arrive and expressed his sincere affection towards Kaushik and his companions. He talked most affably and affectionately with each one of them (as a sign of great respect and welcome)[1] (42).

[1]सम्प्रीत्या तान्सर्वांश्च यथाक्रमम्

जयघोषो महानासीन्माहाश्चर्ये समागते ।
ब्रह्माणमाह विश्वात्मा शृणु ब्रह्मन्यथोदितम् ।।४३।।

कौशिकस्य च ये विप्राः साध्यसाधनतत्पराः ।
हिताय सम्प्रवृत्ता वै कुशस्थलनिवासिनः ।।४४।।

When the assembly saw this miraculous happening which was unexpected and fascinating, they marveled at the marvelous scene of Vishnu paying a personal attention to and talking endearingly with Kaushik and his companions individually. There was a loud chorus of acclaim[1]. All those who were present there were astonished and amazed beyond measure[2]. Then the macrocosmic Supreme Soul of the cosmos, the Supreme Being (Vishnu)[3] said to Brahma, 'Listen Brahmin to what I say (43). This Kaushik Brahmin is a sincere, ardent and diligent devotee of mine, and he is very committed in his spiritual pursuits. He observes all the tenets of spiritualism[4]. These other companions of his hermitage (literally, those who live in a thatched cottage and sit on grass on the ground in a teacher's hermitage)[5] who have accompanied him here also help him in his spiritual endeavours[6] (44). [43-44]

[1]जयघोषो, [2]माहाश्चर्ये, [3]विश्वात्मा, [4]विप्राः साध्यसाधनतत्पराः, [5]कुशस्थलनिवासिनः, [6]हिताय सम्प्रवृत्ता वै

मत्कीर्तिश्रवणे युक्ता गानतत्त्वार्थकोविदाः ।
अनन्यदेवता भक्ताः साध्या देवा भवन्त्विमे ।।४५।।
मत्समीपे तथा ह्यस्य प्रवेषं देहि सर्वदा ।४५½।

All of them who have been devotedly hearing the hymns and songs of my glories[1] and have been signing them like expert singers[2], would be called my eternal devotees[3]. I shall be easily accessible to them[4] (45). They will also be free to come to me (or be near to me)[5] whenever they wish' (45½). [45-45½]

[1]मत्कीर्तिश्रवणे युक्ता, [2]गानतत्त्वार्थकोविदाः, [3]अनन्यदेवता भक्ताः, [4]साध्या देवा, [5]मत्समीपे ह्यस्य प्रवेषं देहि सर्वदा

एवमुक्त्वा पुनर्देवः कौशिकं प्राह माधवः ।।४६।।
स्वशिष्यैस्त्वं महाप्राज्ञ दिग्बलो नाम वै सदा ।
गणाधिपत्यमापन्नो यत्राह तत्समास्व वै ।।४७।।

After having said this, Madhav (Vishnu) addressed Kaushik personally, saying, 'Oh the great, wise and enlightened one[1]! I bless you that you, along with your disciples, would henceforth be known as 'Digbal' (literally, one who has formidable powers and

strengths)[2]. You will become more exalted and superior than my other attendants here in my abode[3], and you can stay here for as long as you like[4]' (46-47).

[1]महाप्राज्ञ, [2]दिग्बलो नाम वै सदा, [3]गणाधिपत्य, [4]मापन्नो यत्राह तत्समास्व

मलतीमालवं चेति प्राह दामोदरो वचः ।
मम लोके यथाकामं भार्यया सह मालव ।।४८।।
दिव्यरूपधरः श्रीमाञ्छृण्वन्गानमिहानुगैः ।
आस्व नित्यं यथाकामं यावल्लोका भवन्ति वै ।।४९।।

Then Damodar (Vishnu) said to Malti and her husband Malav (see verse nos. 10-11), 'Oh Malav! Stay with your wife in a divine form in my abode, the Vishnu Loka or Vaikunth, and listen to the devotional songs being sung in my honour here. As long as this abode lasts, you can stay here for as long as you wish' (48-49).

पद्माक्षमाह भनवान् धनदो भव मानद ।
धनानामीश्वरो भूत्वा विहरस्य यथासुखम् ।।५०।।

Then the Lord said to Padmaksha (see verse no. 5), 'Oh gentleman[1]! You'll be rich and prosperous[2]. Be a custodian of the heavenly riches[3] and live here comfortably as long as you wish' (50).

[1]मानद, [2]धनदो भव, [3]धनानामीश्वरो

ब्रह्मणं च ततः प्राह कौशिकोऽभूद्गणाधिपः ।
गणाः स्तोष्यन्ति तं चाशु प्राप्तो मेऽस्ति सलोकताम् ।।५१।।

Then finally he said to Brahma, 'This Kaushik should become a chief 'Gana' (i.e., he should be counted first amongst my attendants, followers and devotees)[1]. Let all other Ganas (my followers and attendants) please and pray to him (if they wish to please me)[2]. And let him (Kaushik) have a permanent residence in my abode here[3] (51).

[1]गणाधिपः, [2]गणाः स्तोष्यन्ति तं, [3]प्राप्तो मेऽस्ति सलोकताम्

एते च विप्रा नियतं मम भक्ता यशस्विनः ।
श्रोत्रच्छिद्रं यथाहत्य शंकुभिर्वै परस्परम् ।।५२।।
श्रोष्यामो नैव चान्यद्वै हरेः कीर्ति विनेति ये ।
महाव्रतधरा विप्रा मम भक्तिपरायणाः ।।५३।।
एते प्राप्ताश्च देवत्वं मम सान्निध्यमेव च ।
मालवो भार्यया सार्द्धं मत्क्षेत्रं परिगृह्य वै ।।५४।।

These glorious and famous Brahmins are my devotees. They had pierced their ears with iron nails voluntarily[1] and had vowed to each other[2] (52) that none of them would hear anything except the glories and virtues of Hari being sung[3]. Hence, let these exalted and virtuous Brahmins, who have stood fast and victorious in their great vows[4] and who are my sincere devotees and followers[5] (53), attain the exalted stature which is reserved for Gods[6]. Let them have a residence near me[7]. Let them be accompanied by Malva and his chaste and dutiful wife while they stay in my place here in Vaikunth[8] (54). [52-54]

[1]श्रोत्रच्छिद्रं शंकु, [2]परस्परम्, [3]श्रोष्यामो नैव चान्यद्वै हरेः कीर्ति, [4]महाव्रतधरा विप्रा, [5]मम भक्तिपरायणाः, [6]प्राप्ताश्च देवत्वं, [7]मम सान्निध्यमेव, [9]मत्क्षेत्रं

मानमानादिंभिर्नित्यमभ्यर्च्य सततं हि माम् ।
गानं शृणोति नियतो मत्कीर्तिचरितान्वितम् ।।५५।।
तेनासौ प्राप्तवाँल्लोकं मम ब्रह्मन् सनातनम् ।५५½।

Let them eternally stay here with great respect and honour[1]. Let them constantly worship me, honour me[2] and sing and hear[3] about my divine glories and divine deeds[4] (55). Oh Brahmin (Brahma)! This is the reason why they have obtained my abode which is eternal and truthful[5]. [That is, since they have been faithfully singing and hearing my glories being sung while they were on earth and had to suffer because of this stern vow, they have been able to obtain my abode, an achievement which is most difficult for a human being to achieve.] (55½). [55-55½]

[1]मानमानादिं, [2]नित्यमभ्यर्च्य, [3]गानं शृणोति, [4]मत्कीर्तिचरितान्वितम्, [5]लोकं मम सनातनम्

पद्माक्षोऽसौ महाभागः कौशिकस्य महात्मनः ।।५६।।
धनेशत्वमवाप्तोऽसौ मम सान्निध्यमेव च ।५६½।

This Padmaksha is a very fortunate[1] disciple of the great sage[2] Kaushik. Let him become the guardian of wealth[3] and stay near me in my abode[4]' (56-56½).

[1]महाभागः, [2]महात्मनः, [3]धनेशत्व, [4]मम सान्निध्यमेव

एवमुक्त्वा हरिस्तत्र समास्ते लोकपूजितः ।।५७।।
ततो हरिर्भक्तजनैः समावृतः सुखेन तस्थौ कनकासने शुभे ।
भक्तैकगम्यो निजभक्तलोकान्सलालयन्पाणिसरोरुहेण ।।५८।।

Having said so, Sri Hari (Vishnu), who is worshipped, adored, honoured and revered by the whole world[1], sat happily and cheerfully on the golden heavenly throne along with his devotees. He showed great love and affection to them[2] and took care of them with his lotus-like hands which are worthy of being respectfully and reverentially seen and adored by his devotees[3] (57-58).

[1]समास्ते लोकपूजितः, [2]लालयन, [3]पाणिसरोरुह निजभक्तलोकान्स,

Thus ends Canto 5 of this great epic Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing how the devotees of Vishnu, sages Kaushik and others, attained salvation and residence in the abode of the Lord.

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Canto 6
Narad curses Laxmi; the episode of Hari Mitra and the Owl

Vishnu organised a music festival to honour Kaushik and other devotees who had attained his abode as described in the previous Canto. Vishnu had invited a renowned singer named Tumbru to sing on the occasion. There was a huge jostling and shuffling crowed of Gods and other heavenly residents, and in order to restore order, Vishnu's guards pushed them out. In the melee and confusion that followed, Laxmi's maids shoved Narad, and feeling insulted and humiliated, he cursed her to take birth on the earth from the womb of a demoness and cast out like an unwanted, illegitimate child. After the curse, when his anger subsided, Narad was very remorseful and contrite. Vishnu advised him to go to the Owl who was the music teacher for the Gods and learn singing from him if he wished to have the same honour that was shown to Kaushik and Tumbru.

Narad went to the Owl named Gaanbandhu residing in the Himalayas where that expert musician told him about his earlier life when he was a king and had misbehaved with a devotee of Lord Vishnu named Hari Mitra because the latter had violated the king's mandate that no one should sing devotional songs in the honour of Vishnu in his kingdom because only the sared hymns of the Vedas are meant for honouring the supreme 'God', and ordinary singing

of prayers of any other deity was demeaning to Vedas as will as the supreme God. The king's guards had defiled his worship, and as a result, the king became an Owl upon his death and was punished to feed upon his own dead body for a long time, then become a dog and latter on a human being. Meanwhile, Hari Mitra had become a divine resident of the heaven. When Hari Mitra found out about the misfortunes that had fallen upon the king, he gracefully blessed him and remitted the punishment that was inflicted upon the latter for insulting and humiliating the former who was great devotee of Vishnu.

तस्मिन्क्षणे समारब्धो मधुराक्षरपेशलैः ।
महामहोत्सवस्तत्र कौशिकप्रीतयेऽद्भुतः ।।१।।

At that time, in honour of Kaushik, a great and marvelous festival[1] was organised by Vishnu in which melodious songs with fascinating and charming lyrics[2] were sung (1).

[1]महामहोत्सव ऽद्भुतः, [2]मधुराक्षर

विपञ्चीगुणतत्त्वज्ञैर्वाद्यविद्याविशारदैः ।
ततस्तच्छ्रवणायालं चेटीकोटिसमावृता ।।२।।

Millions of celestial maids had assembled there to hear acclaimed musicians who were very skilled and expert in the art of playing the Indian lute besides other musical instruments (2).

गायमाना समायाता लक्ष्मीर्विष्णुपरिग्रहः ।
वृत्ता सहस्रकोटिभिर्वेत्रपाणिभिराशुगैः ।।३।।

The divine consort of Vishnu, Goddess Laxmi[1], came to the venue, singing cheerfully. She was escorted (or surrounded)[2] by thousands and thousands[3] of her maids (lady attendants) holding batons and canes[4] to protect her (3).

[1]लक्ष्मीर्विष्णुपरिग्रहः, [2]वृत्ता, [3]सहस्रकोटि, [4]भिर्वेत्रपाणिभिराशुगैः

ब्रह्मादिसुरसंघानां घनं दृष्ट्वा समागमम् ।
चेटीगणाधिपा रुष्टा भुशुण्डीपरिघान्विताः ।।४।।

Seeing the huge milling crowd of jostling and shuffling Gods and other celestial residents[1] accompanied by Brahma (the patriarch, the creator), the commander of Vishnu's guards[2], who were holding their weapons called 'Bhushundi and Parigha' (i.e., lancets, spears, spikes and other such ancient weapons)[3], became annoyed because

the crowd was getting restless and unmanageable (4).

[1]संघानां घनं समागमम्, [2]चेटीगणाधिपा, [3]भुशुण्डीपरिघान्विताः

ब्रह्मादींस्तर्जयन्त्यस्तान्मुनींश्चापि समन्ततः ।
उत्सार्यदूरं संहृष्टा विष्ठिताः पर्वतोपमाः ।।५।।
सर्वे बहिर्विनिर्याताः सार्द्धं वै ब्रह्मणा सुराः।
युक्तमित्येव भाषन्तः प्रभोरग्रे वयं तु के ।।६।।

They objected to Brahma and other holy sages/Gods from sitting there[1] and took them away to some place at a distance from the dais[2] and made them respectfully sit there[3] (5).

Though they were taken out from the main stage and relocated outside[4], Brahma and other sages/Gods did not take umbrage/offence because they said it was alright[5] as they were very humble in front of the Lord (Vishnu)[6] (6). [5-6]

[1]ब्रह्मादींस्तर्जयन्त्यस्ता, [2]उत्सार्यदूरं, [3]संहृष्टा विष्ठिताः, [4]सर्वे बहिर्विनिर्याताः, [5]युक्तमित्येव, [6]प्रभोरग्रे वयं तु के

तस्थुः प्राञ्जलयः सर्वे त्रिदशागत मन्यवः ।
तस्मिन्क्षणे समाहूतस्तुम्बुरुर्मानपूर्वकम् ।।७।।

That is why none of the sages/Gods became annoyed and angry or felt humiliated and insulted in any way. They stood with joined hands. Right at that time, (a famous and expert singer named) Tumbru was called in with great honour (7).

प्रविवेश समीपं वै देव्या देवस्य चैव हि ।
तत्रासीनो यथायोगं नानामूर्च्छाक्षरान्वितम् ।।८।।
जगौ कलपदं हृष्टो विपञ्चीं चाप्यवादयत् ।
विष्णुना कौशिकप्रीत्यै प्रत्युक्तौ गायकोत्तमः ।।९।।

He came to the presiding God and Goddess of the function (in this case, Lord Vishnu and Goddess Laxmi)[1] and sat down on the designated seat reserved for him. He sang in different ways on the Indian lute, employing all the 7 notes of Indian classical music, first in an ascending order and then in the descending tone[2]. He sang most cheerfully with an exhilarated and ecstatic heart. Vishnu had invited this excellent singer to please and honour Kaushik (or, he had organised this musical fest to celebrate the occasion of Kaushik coming to heaven) (8-9).

[1]देव्या देवस्य, [2]नानामूर्च्छाक्षरान्वितम् विपञ्चीं चाप्यवादयत्

[Note :- The 7 notes of Indian classical music are the following— Sa, Re, Gaa, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni.]

नानारत्नसमायुक्तैर्दिव्यैराभरणोत्तमैः ।
दिव्यमालैश्च वसनैः पूजितो विष्णुमन्दिरात् ।।१०।।
निर्गतस्तुम्बुरुर्हृष्टो जगाम स यथागतम् ।
ब्रह्माद्यास्त्रिदशाः सर्वे मुनयश्च यथागतम् ।।११।।
जग्मुर्विष्णुं प्रणम्योच्चैर्जयेति भाषिणस्ततः ।११½।

He was honoured by gifts of different varieties of gems and jewels[1], and was adorned by magnificent ornaments[2], garlands[3] and ceremonial robes of honour[4]. After being thus worshipped, honoured and shown due greatest of respect[5] in the divine palace of Vishnu[6] (10), he (Tumbru) came out very happy and satisfied[7] and went away to his place most cheerfully. Brahma and other Gods and sages also paid their obeisance to Vishnu, sang prayers in his honour, bowed respectfully before him and hailed him as they departed from there for their own respective places (11½). [10-11½]

[1]नानारत्न, [2]र्दिव्यैराभरणोत्तमैः, [3]दिव्यमालैश्च, [4]वसनैः, [5]पूजितो, [6]विष्णुमन्दिरात्, [7]निर्गतस्तुम्बुरुर्हृष्टो,

नारदोऽथ मुनिर्दृष्ट्वा तुम्बुरोः सत्क्रियां हरेः ।।१२।।
शोकाविष्टेन मनसा संतप्तहृदयेक्षणः ।
चिन्तामापेदिवांस्तत्र शोकमूर्च्छाकुलान्तरः ।।१३।।

Narad saw Tumbru being shown such great honour and respect[1] by Hari (Vishnu) himself, and he could not stomach or tolerate it (because of the feeling of jealousy). He was overcome with anguish and grief[2] and his heart was tormented with as sense of humiliation and insult[3]. He started worrying and feeling annoyed, peeved and embarrassed[4] (12-13).

[1]तुम्बुरोः सत्क्रियां हरेः, [2]शोकाविष्टेन मनसा शोकमूर्च्छा, [3]संतप्तहृदयेक्षणः, [4]चिन्तामापे

ततः क्रोधेन महता जज्वाल मुनिपुङ्गवः ।
लक्ष्मीं शशाप सहसा तद्दासीभिस्तिरस्कृतः ।।१४।।

As a consequence, that great sage (Narad) became very enraged and flared up in anger[1]. When he was somehow shown disrespect by the maid attendants of Laxmi[2], he immediately cursed her

(Laxmi)[3] (14).

[1]क्रोधेन महता जज्वाल, [2]तद्दासीभिस्तिरस्कृतः, [3]लक्ष्मीं शशाप सहसा

[Note :- In all probabilities, when Brahma and other Gods had gone away from there and even Tumbru had left the place, Vishnu had almost neglected Narad. The latter expected that Vishnu would pay special attention to him, and though Tumbru was shown official respect, Narad expected Vishnu to at least call him near and show some basic courtesy to him by offering a garland and a pleasant smile in the least. But when Vishnu did not pay any attention to him, he must have moved closer to Laxmi to complain. In the process, Laxmi's guards must have pushed him away from approaching her. This added fuel to the fire of Narad's anger, and he lost all control and cursed Laxmi.]

यदहं राक्षसं भावं गृहीत्वा विष्णु कान्तया ।
चेटीभिर्वारितो दूरं वेत्राघातेन ताडितः ।।१५।।
तस्मात्सञ्जायतां लक्ष्मीं रक्षसां गर्भसम्भवा ।
यतोऽहं बहिराक्षिप्तश्चेटीभिः सावहेलनम् ।।१६।।
हेलया राक्षसी च त्वां बहिः क्षेप्स्यति भूतले ।१६½।

He said most indignantly, 'I was invited here by Vishnu (and I have not come uninvited)[1], but his wife (Laxmi)[2] has treated me with disdain as if I was some evil and hateful and unwanted demon[3]. Her attendants pushed me away[4] and I was tormented and insulted by being struck by their canes or sticks[5] (15).

Hence, I curse that Laxmi would be born from the womb of a demoness[6]. Besides this, the way I was unceremoniously and contemptuously pushed out by her maids[7] (16), she too would be thrown out scornfully to the ground[8] by that demoness[9]' (16½). [15-16½]

[1]गृहीत्वा विष्णु, [2]कान्तया, [3]राक्षसं भावं, [4]चेटीभिर्वारितो दूरं, [5]वेत्राघातेन ताडितः, [6]तस्मात्सञ्जायतां लक्ष्मीं रक्षसां गर्भसम्भवा, [7]बहिरा सावहेलनम्, [8]बहिः क्षेप्स्यति भूतले हेलया, [9]राक्षसी

इत्युक्तै नारदेनाथ चकम्पे भुवनत्रयम् ।।१७।।
हाहाकारं ततश्चक्रुर्देवगन्धर्वदानवाः ।
नारदो विललापाथ धिग्धिङ मामिति च ब्रुवन् ।।१८।।

When Narad made this horrible and ignoble curse, all the 3 worlds

shook and trembled in horror (17). All the Gods, Gandharvas (celestial musicians; a type of junior Gods) and Danavs (demonic or evil spirits)[1] were filled with consternation and awe, and they lamented in dismay and distress[2]. When his anger subsided, Narad was overcome with severe contrition and regret; he cursed himself with contempt and felt very sorry, dismayed and distressed. He lamented most distraughtfully and woefully[3], and said— (17-18).

[1]ततश्चक्रुर्देवगन्धर्वदानवा:, [2]हाहाकारं, [3]विललापाथ धिग्धिङ मामिति

नारायणसमायोगो महालक्ष्मीसमीपत: ।
अहो तुम्बुरुणा प्राप्तोधिङ्मा मूढमचेतनम् ।।१९।।
योऽयं हरे: सन्निकासाद्दूतैर्निर्वासित: कथम् ।
जीवन्यास्यामि कुत्राहं किं मे तुम्बुरुणाकृतम् ।।२०।।
रोदमानो मुहुर्विद्वान्धिङ्मामिति च चिन्तयन् ।२०½।

'I was humiliated[1] in front of Tumbru while Vishnu and Laxmi were present in the vicinity[2]. Shame to me and my honour and self respect that I am so foolish enough to still live with this dishonour and shame on my face[3] (19). I was insultingly ejected out from the main venue, even though Hari (Vishnu) was present nearby[4], by his guards and attendants[5]. Say, where can I go alive, or with what face should I live amongst the Gods and the sages, after being subjected to such a great humiliation and insult at the hands of Vishnu and Laxmi[6]? Oh Tumbru! What have you done[7]!' (20).

Lamenting and regretting woefully thus[8], that wise one (Narad) was in a very dejected and depressed mood[9] (20½). [19-20½]

[1]प्राप्तोधिङ्मा, [2]समीपत:, [3]मूढमचेतनम्, [4]हरे: सन्निकासार्निर्वासित:, [5]दूतै, [6]जीवन्यास्यामि कुत्राहं किं मे, [7]तुम्बुरुणाकृतम्, [8]रोदमानो मुहुधिङ्मामिति, [9]चिन्तयन् विद्वान,

ततो नारायणो लक्ष्म्या: शापं श्रुत्वा सुदारुणम् ।।२१।।
लक्ष्म्या सह हृषीकेश आजगाम यतो मुनि: ।
रमां प्रसाद्य तं विप्रं प्रत्युवाच कृताञ्जलि: ।।२२।।

Meanwhile, when Narayan (Vishnu) heard about Narad's horrible curse[1] for Laxmi (21), Hrishikesh[2] (one of the names of Vishnu) took her along and came to the sage (to ask for forgiveness). Laxmi praised the sage and showed him due respect with joined hands[3] and said to him— (22). [21-22]

[1]शापं सुदारुणम्, [2]हृषीकेश, [3]प्रत्युवाच कृताञ्जलि:

यदुक्तं भवता मह्यं तत्तथा न तदन्यथा ।
तत्र किंचित्प्रार्थयामि मुने तत्कृपया कुरु ।।२३।।
आरण्यानां मुनीनां वै स्तोकं स्तोकं च शोणितम्।
कलसापूरितं भक्षेद्राक्षसी या च कामत: ।।२४।।
तस्या गर्भे भविष्यामि तच्छोणितसमुद्भवा ।२४½।

'Whatever you have said for me shall not go in vain (i.e., your words would be fulfilled). But still, oh great sage, I pray to you to be kind and graceful towards me (23). Bless me with this additional boon— 'Let one drop of blood of each of the sages, seers, ascetics and hermits[1] who live in the forest[2] be kept or stored in a pitcher till it is full[3]. Any demoness who drinks this blood out of her own free will[4] (24), let me be born from her womb[5]'' (24½). [23-24½]

[1]स्तोकं स्तोकं च शोणितम्, [2]आरण्यानां मुनीनां, [3]कलसापूरितं, [4]भक्षेद्राक्षसी या च कामत:, [5]तस्या गर्भे भविष्यामि

इत्युक्तं रमयाचिन्त्या सम्भवान्नो भवेदिति ।।२५।।
नारदस्तु तथेत्याह अस्या: सर्व हि दारुणम् ।२५½।

When Rama (Laxmi) requested that above circumstance is made possible for her birth as destined due to the curse of the sage (25), Narad replied, 'All these will be too harsh[1] for you' (25½). [25-25½]

[1]सर्व हि दारुणम्

ततो नारायणो देव: प्रोक्तवान्नारदं मुनिम् ।।२६।।
नाहं दानैर्न तपसा नेज्यया नापि तीर्थत: ।
सन्तुष्यामि द्विजेश्रेष्ठ यथा नाम्नां प्रकीर्तनात् ।।२७।।
गानेन नामगुणयोर्मम सायुज्यमाप्नुयात् ।
निदर्शनं कौशिकोऽत्र गानान्मल्लोकमाप्तवान् ।।२८।।

Then Narayan (Vishnu) said to Narad, 'Oh sage! (26). I am not pleased as much by charities[1], Tapa (doing austerity, penance and keeping of stern religious vows)[2], honour and praise[3] as well as by going on pilgrimage[4], as I am by singing or chanting my name individually or in chorus in a group (i.e., doing Kirtan)[5]. Oh exalted sage! (27) Those who sing my holy name and divine glories[6] are able to find an abode in my heaven near me[7]. Kaushik is a living example of this; he has attained my abode by singing my name with great devotion (28). [26-28].

[1]नाहं दानै, [2]र्न तपसा, [3]नेज्यया, [4]नापि तीर्थतः, [5]नाम्नां प्रकीर्तनात्, [6]गानेन नामगुणयोर्मम, [7]सायुज्यमाप्नुयात्,

मूर्च्छनादियुतं गानं नाम्नामति मम प्रियम् ।
तम्बुरुस्तत्प्रभावेण प्रियस्त्वत्तोपि मे द्विज ।।२९।।

Those who sing the glories of my divine name using all the 7 modes and notes of Indian classical music[1] are very endearing to me. That is the reason, oh Brahmin, that Tumbru is dearer to me as compare to you (29).

[1]मूर्च्छनादियुतं गानं नाम्ना

मूर्च्छनातालयोगेन गानेन त्वं तथा भव ।
उलूकं पश्य गत्वा त्वं यदि गाने मतिस्तव ।।३०।।

You should also sing similarly employing all the modes and notes of classical music[1], besides using precise beats and rhythm to sing[2], and attain the same stature (as attained by Tumbru). If you have an inclination to sing and learn more about devotional music, go and see 'Uluk' (the divine Owl)[3] (30).

[1]मूर्च्छना, [2]तालयोगेन गानेन, [3]उलूकं पश्य

[Note :- The word 'Uluk' 'उलूकं' has the following meaning— (i) owl, (ii) Indra, the king of Gods, (iii) one of the names of sage Kanad or Kanaad, who was an expert musician and lyricist and the patron saint of musicians, lyricists and singers, (iv) the owl referred here is king Bhuvnesh who had become an owl under a curse —see verse nos. 46-91 of this Canto below.]

मानेसोत्तरशैले तु गानबन्धुरिति स्मृतः ।
तद्गच्छ शीघ्रं शैलेन्द्रं गानवांस्त्वं भविष्यसि ।।३१।।

He lives on a mountain to the north of lake Mansarover (the legendary lake in the Himalayas where Mt. Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva, is situated)[1], and is famously known as Gaanbandhu (literally, a person who is closely attached to singing, or a person who is very fond of singing, or a person who belongs to the brotherhood of great signers). If you go to him on that mountain soon, you too would become an acclaimed singer' (31).

[1]मानेसोत्तरशैले, [2]गानबन्ध

इत्युक्तो विस्मयाविष्टो नारदो वाग्विदां वरः।
मानसोत्तरशैले तु गानबन्धुं जगाम वै ।।३२।।

When he (Vishnu) said this, Narad became amazed and mystified[1] though he was considered the senior most amongst orators and those who were wise, clever and deft in the use of words[2]. [That is, Narad had thought up till now he was a good speaker, was constantly 'singing' the glories of the Lord on his lute which he always carried with him, and in his foolish ignorance he had imagined that there could be no one else who would be wiser, more devoted and a better singer of prayers than him. When Vishnu chastened him by lauding Tumbru's and Gaanbandhu's acumen at singing devotional songs, Narad was stunned and dumbfounded. His entire ego collapsed like a punctured balloon.] So he went to Gaanbandhu on the mountains north of Mansarover (32).

[1]विस्मयाविष्टो, [2]वाग्विदां वरः,

गन्धर्वाः किन्नरा यक्षास्तथा चाप्सरसां गणाः ।
समासीनास्तु परितो गानबन्धुश्च मध्यतः ।।३३।।

Groups of Gandharvas (senior celestial musicians), Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers), Yakshas (demi-Gods who are attendants of Kuber) and Apsaras (celestial damsels and courtesans of Indra's court) surrounded Gaanbandhu. He was seated in their midst like a teacher surrounded by his students (33).

गानशिक्षासमापन्नाः शिक्षिता स्तेन पक्षिणा ।
स्निग्धकण्ठस्वरास्तत्र समासीना मुदान्विता ।।३४।।

He was talented in the art and craft of skillful music and he was an unchallenged expert in it[1]. He had even taught many birds[2] in the art of singing. Numerous birds with a sweet, pleasant, charming, enthralling and enchanting melodious voice (or throat)[3] were cheerfully present there[4] (hopping around and chirping merrily away, chattering in merriment and ecstasy) (34).

[1]गानशिक्षासमापन्नाः, [2]शिक्षिता स्तेन पक्षिणा, [3]स्निग्धकण्ठस्वरा, [4]मुदान्विता

[Note :- Numerous birds have a very sweet and captivating sound emanating from their throats. For example, the bird cuckoo, parrot, blackbird, peacock, the house sparrow etc.. Some birds speak so loudly that their voice resonates and is heard for long distances (e.g., peacock), some speak very softly (e.g., the house sparrow, black bird), some learn to mimic human voice (e.g., parrot), some speak in an awe

inspiring voice which create and aura of darkness (e.g., owl), some speak in a grunt (e.g., pigeons), some speak in a crowing manner (e.g., a crow) and so on and so forth. According to legend, a king named Bhuvnesh was in the form of an owl —see verse nos. 46-91, and he was a patron saint of singers, especially non-human singers.]

ततो नारदमालोक्य गानबन्धुरुवाच ह ।
प्रणिपत्य यथा न्यायं स्वागतेनाभ्यपूजयेत् ।।३५।।
किमर्थं भगवन्नत्र चागतोऽसि महाद्युते ।
कि कार्यं हि महाब्रह्मन्ब्रूहि किं करवाणि ते ।।३६।।

When Gaanbandhu saw Narad coming, he duly bowed before the celestial sage with reverence[1] and welcomed him by worshipping him[2]. Then he asked the sage (35) 'Oh the most glorious and radiant Lord (Narad)[3]! Say, why have you come here to me? Oh the great and exalted Brahmin[4]! What is your work? Tell me what can I do for you?' (36). [35-36]

[1]प्रणिपत्य यथा न्यायं, [2]स्वागतेनाभ्यपूजयेत्, [3]महाद्युते भगवन्नत्र, [4]महाब्रह्म

तत् छ्रुत्वा नारदो धीमान्प्रत्युवाच सपक्षिणम् ।
उलूकेन्द्र महाप्राज्ञ शृणु सर्वं यथातथम् ।।३७।।
मम वृत्तं प्रवक्ष्यामि तच्च भूतं महाद्भुतम् ।३७½।

Hearing this, the intelligent and wise sage Narad[1] said to the king amongst birds (i.e., the owl called Gaanbandhu)[2], 'Oh the most exalted, wise, erudite, sagacious and scholarly owl[3]! Listen to everything as it happened with me[4] (37). I shall narrate to you the amazing and strange sequence of things that have happened to me and the circumstances that which I had to go through (37½). [37-37½]

[1]नारदो धीमा, [2]सपक्षिणम्, [3]उलूकेन्द्र महाप्राज्ञ, [4]महाद्भुतम्

वैकुण्ठनगरेब्रह्मन्नारायणसमीपगम् ।।३८।।
मां विनिर्धूय संहृष्टं समाहूय च तुम्बुरुम् ।
लक्ष्मीसमन्वितो विष्णुश्शृणोद्गानमुत्तमम् ।।३९।।
ब्रह्मादयो वयं सर्वे निरस्ताः स्थानतश्च्युताः।
कौशिकाद्याः समासीना गानयोगेन वै हरिम् ।।४०।।

In the celestial city of Vaikunth of Narayan Brahm (Vishnu)[1] (38), I was subjected to humiliation and insult and was demeaned[2] by being relegated to the sidelines (in a music festival organised by Vishnu and

Laxmi in honour of a sage called Kaushik), and Tumbru was invited and felicitated publically[3]. Vishnu, along with Laxmi, heard him singing beautiful songs[4] (but neglected me, though I was invited and am always singing Vishnu's divine glories on my lute) (39). Brahma, the creator, and other Gods and sages, including myself, were pushed out of the place (see verse nos. 5-6), while Kaushik and others were allowed to remain seated close to Hari[5] (40). [38-40]

[1]वैकुण्ठनगरेब्रह्मन्नारायण, [2]मां विनिर्धूय, [3]संहृष्टं समाहूय च तुम्बुरुम्, [4]कौशिकाद्याः समासीना गानयोगेन वै हरिम्

समाराध्यैव सम्प्राप्ता गाणपत्यं यथासुखम् ।
तेनाहमतिदुःखर्तो यत्तप्तं तु मया तपः ।।४१।।
यद्दत्तं यद्धुतं चैव यच्चापि श्रुतमेव हि ।
यदधीतं च गानस्य कलां नार्हति षोडशीम् ।।४२।।

He (Kaushik) was cheerfully bestowed with great honour and a title of being 'chief of the Vishnu's attendants'[1] by the virtue of his devotion for the Lord[2]. At this, I am feeling extremely perturbed, tormented, anguished and aggrieved[3] (because I am also a great singer and devotee of Vishnu, and no such honour was ever shown to me). Whatever Tapa (severe austerity, penance, keeping of stern religious vows)[4] (41), charity[5] and religious sacrifices, including fire sacrifices[6], that I have done, whatever I have learnt or heard and studied[7], are no match for even a sixteenth fraction of the art of singing and music[8] (because it appears Vishnu is more pleased by this than anything else)! (42). [41-42]

[1]सम्प्राप्ता गाणपत्यं यथासुखम्, [2]समाराध्यैव, [3]हमतिदुःखर्तो यत्तप्तं, [4]मया तपः, [5]यद्दत्तं, [6]यद्धुतं, [7]यच्चापि श्रुतमेव, [8]गानस्य कलां नार्हति षोडशीम्

विष्णोर्माहात्म्ययुक्तस्य गानयोगस्य वै ततः ।
पश्चात्तापं च मे दृष्ट्वा मां च नारायणोऽब्रवीत् ।।४३।।
उलूकं गच्छ देवर्षे गानबन्धुं मतिर्यदि ।
गाने च वर्तते ब्रह्मंस्तत्र त्वं गानमाप्स्यसि ।।४४।।

When Narayan saw me in a remorseful and depressed mood full of regret and contrition[1] when I reckoned the importance, significance and impact[2] of that singing soaked in great devotion and lauding the divine glory of the Lord (Vishnu)[3], (a type of singing that I lacked), he said to me to assuage my ruffled feelings and also to reassure me (43),

'Oh the sage of the Gods (or, the celestial sage)[4]! If you are sincerely interested in singing (to please me with your deotional singing), go to Uluk known as Gaanbandhu (see verse nos. 30-31 above)[5]. He is a most wise teacher of music[6], and you shall get to learn proper singing methods from him at his place[7] (44). [43-44]

[1]पश्चात्तापं, [2]वै ततः, [3]विष्णोर्माहात्म्ययुक्तस्य, [4]देवर्षे, [5]उलूकं गानबन्धुं, [6]गाने वर्तते ब्रह्मंस्तत्र, [7]त्वं गानमाप्स्यसि

इंत्यहंप्रषितस्तेन त्वत्समीपमिहागतः ।
किं करिष्यामि शिष्योऽहं तव मां पालयाव्यय ।।४५।।

This is how I have come to you at his behest and inspiration[1]. Oh the imperishable one[2]! Accept me as one of your disciples and look after me and take care of me[3]. Please teach me the intricacies of proper singing' (45).

[1]इंत्यहंप्रषितस्तेन, [2]ऽव्यय, [3]तव मां पालया

नारदं प्राह धर्मात्मा गानबन्धुर्महायशाः ।
शृणु नारद यद्वृत्तं पुरा मम महामते ।।४६।।
अत्याश्चर्चसमायुक्तं सर्वपापहरं शुभम् ।४६½।

The most acclaimed and renowned Gaanbandhu[1], who was a righteous and virtuous soul[2], said to Narad, 'Oh wise Narad[3]! Listen to my history (46). It is very fascinating and strange indeed[4]; it is a dispeller of all sins[5] and it is very auspicious to hear[6] (46½). [46-46½]

[1]गानबन्धुर्महायशाः, [2]धर्मात्मा, [3]नारदं महामते, [4]अत्याश्चर्चसमायुक्तं, [5]सर्वपापहरं, [6]शुभम्

भुवनेश इति ख्यातो राजाभूद्धार्मिकः पुरा ।।४७।।
अश्वमेधसहस्रैश्च वाजपेयायुतेन च ।
अन्यैश्च विविधैर्यज्ञैरिष्ट्वान्भूरिदक्षिणैः ।।४८।।

In an ancient time, there was a famous[1] king called Bhuvnesh. He was righteous, virtuous and noble[2]. He had successfully done 1000 Ashwamedh Yagyas (horse sacrifices)[3], 10,000 Vajpaye Yagya[4] and many other religious rituals entailing huge charities and done with great devotion[5] (47-48).

[1]ख्यातो, [2]धार्मिकः, [3]अश्वमेधसहस्रैश्च, [4]वाजपेयायुतेन, [5]विविधैर्यज्ञैरिष्ट्वान्भूरिदक्षिणैः

[Note :- The two fire sacrifices referred here —the horse sacrifice and Vajpaye Yagya —have been described earlier in Canto 1, verse no. 46.]

गवां कोट्यर्बुदं चैव सुवर्णस्य तथैव च ।
वाससां रथनागानां कन्याश्वनां तथैव च ।।४९।।
दत्त्वा स राजा विप्रेभ्यो मेदिनीं पर्यपालयत् ।
न्यवारयत्स्वके राज्ये गानयोगेन केशवम् ।।५०।।

Millions of cows, millions and millions worth of gold, huge quantities of clothes and robes, chariots and other vehicles, unmarried girls (called Kanyas) and innumerable horses were donated by that noble king to Brahmins. He ruled over the realm most dutifully and according to religious sanctions, but unfortunately he prohibited/ proscribed[1] the singing of the glories of Keshav (Vishnu) in his kingdom[2] (50). [49-50]

[1]न्यवारयत्स्वके, [2]राज्ये गानयोगेन केशवम्

[Note :- The 'unmarried girls' or virgins referred above perhaps mean he used to marry off poor unmarried girls of marriageable age by state funds in a mass marriage ceremony held simultaneously with fire sacrifices. In Hindu tradition, marriage of girl is considered a very holy and charitable deed, and a person who finances such marriages is deemed to be doing a great religious activity.]

अन्यं वा गानयोगेन गायेद्यदि स मे भवेत् ।
बध्यः स्वात्मना तस्माद्वैदैरीड्यः परः पुमान् ।।५१।।
न ब्राह्मणैश्च गातव्यं महद्भिर्वेदमुत्तमम् ।
गानयोगेन सर्वत्र स्त्रियों गायन्तु मां सदा ।।५२।।

The king ordained, 'Anyone who uses music and song as a means to pray the Lord (Vishnu)[1] will be killed by me[2], because the supreme, transcendental Lord is to be worshipped using only the words or hymns of the Vedas[3] (and not by songs or poetry composed by ordinary men) (51). Most exalted and wise Brahmins who are learned in the Vedas[4] should not sing ordinary songs[5] (because they should sing only the glories of the Lord using the hymns of the Vedas). Singing girls or women folk should always sing my laurels[6] everywhere in the kingdom, should they wish to sing a song at all (52). [51-52]

[1]गानयोगेन गायेद्यदि, [2]बध्यः स्वात्मना, [3]तस्माद्वैदैरीड्यः परः पुमान्, [4]ब्राह्मणैश्च महद्भिर्वेदमुत्तमम्, [5]न गातव्यं, [6]स्त्रियों गायन्तु मां सदा, [7]नयोगेन सर्वत्र

[Note :- The hymns of the Vedas are chanted and sung by Brahmins and are not supposed to be sung by women and non-Brahmins. So, the king actually meant that Brahmins should sing the praises of the Lord but the rest of the people should only sing the king's glories like they are being sung by royal bards and minstrels.]

सूतमागधसंघाश्च गीतं मे कारयन्तु वै ।
इत्याज्ञाप्य महातेजा राज्यं वै पर्यपालयत् ।।५३।।

Let the 'Suts and Magadha' (royal bards and minstrels) sing only my glories'. Making this royal proclamation, that glorious king reigned over his kingdom (53).

तस्य राज्ञः पुराभ्याशे हरिमित्र इति स्मृतः ।
ब्राह्मणो विष्णुभक्तश्च सर्वद्वन्द्वविवर्जिता ।।५४।।

In that kingdom there lived a devotee of Vishnu[1] called Hari Mitra. He was at peace with himself[2] (54).

[1]विष्णुभक्त, [2]सर्वद्वन्द्वविवर्जिता

नदीपुलिनमासाद्य प्रतिमाञ्च हरेः शुभाम् ।
समभ्यर्च्य यथाशास्त्रं घृतदध्युत्तरं बहु ।।५५।।
मिष्ठान्नं पायसं दत्त्वा हरेरावेद्य धूपकम् ।
प्रणिपत्य यथान्यायं तत्र विन्यस्तमानसः ।।५६।।
अगायत हरिं तत्र तालवीणालयान्वितम् ।
अतीव स्नेहसंयुक्तस्तद्गीतेनान्तरात्मना ।।५७।।

He used to go to the bank of the river and worshipped an auspicious image (idol) of Hari there[1] most devotedly an according to the principles and process laid down by the scriptures[2]. He offered lots of Ghee (clarified butter)[3], curd and whey[4] (55), sweets[5] and sweet puddings[6] to Hari (Vishnu) besides the offerings of different perfumes, scents and fragrances[7]. He used to prostrate before the image[8] and pray from the deepest recesses of his heart most sincerely[9] (56). He used to sing the glories of the Lord very melodiously and soulfully on the Indian lute[10]; he remained ever engrossed and blissful in the memory of the Lord. He caressed his Atma (soul) most lovingly by singing the song in the honour of the divine and supreme Lord (Vishnu)[11] (57). [55-57]

[1]प्रतिमाञ्च हरेः शुभाम्, [2]समभ्यर्च्य यथाशास्त्रं, [3]घृत, [4]दधि, [5]मिष्ठान्नं, [6]पायसं, [7]धूप, [8]प्रणिपत्य, [9]विन्यस्तमानसः, [10]तालवीणालयान्वितम्, [11]स्नेहसंयुक्तस्तद्गीतेनान्तरात्मना

ततो राज्ञः समादेशाद्भटास्तस्य समागताः ।
तदर्चनादि सकंल निर्धूय च समन्ततः ।।५८।।
ब्राह्मणं च गृहीत्वा ते राज्ञे सम्यङ्न्यवेदयन् ।।५८½।

The king's soldiers and messengers came there on the king's orders. They defiled all the worship paraphernalia and brought the Brahmin in captivity to the king (58-58½).

[Note :- We must note here that Hari Mitra used to worship his Lord in his ordinary and humble way, and did not use the hymn of the Vedas to sing the praises of the Lord as mandated by the king. This was his offense.]

ततो राजा द्विजश्रेष्ठं परिभर्त्स्य सुदुर्मना ।।५९।।
राज्यान्निर्वासयामास हृत्वा सर्वधनादिकम् ।
प्रतिमां च हरेश्चैव नापश्यत्सव यदृच्छया ।।६०।।

The king was very anguished and annoyed[1] and he severely reproached[2] that exalted Brahmin (59). He forfeited all the little wealth that he had[3] and exiled him from his kingdom[4] for breaking his edict. The king never saw an image of Hari willingly[5] (60). [59-60]

[1]सुदुर्मना, [2]परिभर्त्स्य, [3]हृत्वा सर्वधनादिकम्, [4]राज्यान्निर्वासयामास, [5]नापश्यत्सव यदृच्छया प्रतिमां

[Note :- Verse no. 47-50 show that the king was righteous and noble and had been making great charities and doing fire sacrifices, but in his stupid ignorance he had treated Vishnu, the Supreme Being, with disdain and hatred as is clear in verse no. 51-53. That is why he had never seen an image of Hari.]

ततः कालेन महता कालधर्ममुपेयिवान् ।
लोकान्तरमनुप्राप्य उलूकं देहमाश्रितः ।।६१।।

After a long time when the king's death approached, he died and became an owl in his next life (61).

सर्वत्र गच्छमानोपि भक्ष्यं किंचिन्न चाप्तवान् ।
क्षुधार्तश्च सदा खिन्नो यममाह सुदुःखितः ।।६२।।

He went everywhere but could not find anything to eat. Being constantly tormented by hunger, he said to Yam (the God of death)— (62).

क्षुत्पीडा वर्तते देव दुर्गतस्य सदा मम ।
मया पापं कृतं किंवा किं करिष्यामि वै यम ।।६३।।

'Oh Lord! I am being constantly tormented by hunger and hounded by distress and misery. Oh Yam! What wrong did I do or what sin did I commit, and what should I do now to remit them or atone for my misdemeanours and misdeeds?' (63).

ततस्तं धर्मराट् प्राह धर्माधर्मप्रदर्शकः ।
त्वया हि सुमहत्पापं कृतमज्ञानतो नृप ।।६४।।

Then the Lord of Dharma (Yam)[1], who can judge people following the path of righteousness or unrighteousness[2], said to him, 'Oh king! You have done horrendous and unpardonable sins[3] due to your stupidity and ignorance[4] (64).

धर्मराट्, धर्माधर्मप्रदर्शकः, सुमहत्पापं, कृतमज्ञानतो,

हरिमित्रं प्रति तदा वासुदेवपरायणम् ।
हरिमित्रे कृतं पापं वासुदेवार्चनादिषु ।।६५।।
तेन पापेन सम्प्राप्तः क्षुद्बोधस्त्वां सदा नृप ।
दानयज्ञादिकं सर्व प्रनष्टं ते नारधिप ।।६६।।

Hari Mitra was devoted to Vasudeo (Vishnu)[1] and used to worship him. You had tormented him and created obstacles in his worship of Vasudeo[2]. This was a great sin that you had committed[3] (65). Oh king! It is due to that sin of yours that you are ever tormented by hunger and pursued by distress[4]. Oh the fallen and sinful king[5]! Your good deeds that you had done, such as giving alms and making charities and donations[6], have come to a naught, or they have been decimated and eroded[7] by that single misdeed done by you (66). [65-66]

[1]वासुदेवपरायणम्, [2]वासुदेवार्चनादिषु, [3]कृतं पापं, [4]सम्प्राप्तः क्षुद्बोधस्त्वां, [5]नारधिप, [6]दानयज्ञादिकं, [7]सर्व प्रनष्टं

गीतनाट्यलयोपेतं गायमानं सदा हरिम् ।
हरिमित्रं समाहूय हृतवानसि तद्धनम् ।।६७।।
उपहारादिकं सर्व वासुदेवस्य सन्निधौ ।
तब भृत्याः समाहृत्य पापं चक्रुस्तवाज्ञया ।।६८।।

You had summoned Hari Mitra who used to always sing the glories of Hari in melodious tunes and accompanying rhythms[1], and you had forfeited the little assets that he had[2] (67). Whatever offerings

he had made to the image of Vasudeo, your soldiers and messengers had thrown them away contemptuously and disdainfully on your orders[3]. This was an unimaginable and horribly sinful act that was done at your behest[4] (see verse nos. 58-58½) (68). [67-68]

[1]गीतनाट्यलयोपेतं गायमानं, [2]हृतवानसि तद्धनम्, [3]समाहृत्य क्रुस्तवाज्ञया, [4]पापं च

हरे कीर्तिं विना चान्यद् ब्राह्मणेन नृपोत्तम ।
न गेययोगे मन्तव्यं तस्मात्पापं त्वया कृतम् ।।६९।।
नष्टं ते स्वर्गलोकाद्यं गच्छ पर्वतकोटरम् ।
पूर्वोत्सृष्टं स्वदेहं ते खाद नित्यं निकृत्य वै ।।७०।।

Oh exalted king[1]! A Brahmin should not sing eulogies of anyone except singing the glories of Hari (Vishnu)[2]. So, punishing Hari Mitra for singing the praises of Lord Hari or Vasudeo was an unpardonable offence and a great sin that you had comitted[3] (69).

All your chances of attaining the heaven (because of the good deeds done by you and their good rewards) have therefore been made null and void, or have been literally runied[4]. As a punishment for your misdemeanours and sinful act, you should now go to the cave of the mountain[5] where your dead mortal body of your erstwhile form as a king is lying[6]. You should feed upon it on a daily basis[7] (70). [69-70]

[1]नृपोत्तम, [2]हरे कीर्तिं विना चान्यद्, [3]तस्मात्पापं त्वया कृतम्, [4]नष्टं ते स्वर्गलोकाद्यं, [5]गच्छ पर्वतकोटरम्, [6]पूर्वोत्सृष्टं स्वदेहं, [7]खाद नित्यं निकृत्य वै

तस्मिन्क्षीणे त्विमं देहं खाद नित्यं क्षुधान्वितः।
महानिरयसंस्थस्त्वं यावन्मन्वन्तरं भवेत् ।।७१।।
मन्वन्तरे ततोऽतीते भूम्यां त्वं श्वा भविष्यसि ।
ततःकालेन कियता मानुष्यमनुलप्स्यसे ।।७२।।

Overcome and tormented by hunger[1], you must nibble at that steadily decaying and rotting body of yours[2] daily for a period of 1 Manwantar[3] and suffer the horrors of a horrible hell[4] (71). At the end of that period, you will become a dog on earth[5]. After a long time there, you would get a human body once again[6]' (72). [71-72]

[1]क्षुधान्वितः, [2]तस्मिन्क्षीणे त्विमं देहं, [3]यावन्मन्वन्तरं, [4]महानिरयसंस्थस्त्वं, [5]भूम्यां त्वं श्वा भविष्यसि, [6]मानुष्यमनुलप्स्यसे

[Note :- 1 Manwantar = a cycle of 71 four Yugs. These

Yugs are Sat, Treta Dwapar and Kali. The word also means 1/14th part of 1 day of Brahma.]

एवमुक्त्वा यमौ विद्वांस्तत्रैवान्तरधीयत ।
सोऽहं नारद भूपालः पुरेदानीमुलूकताम् ।।७३।।
लब्धवान्कर्मदोषेण हरिमित्रकृतेन वै ।
ततो मानसशैलेऽहं कोटरे ह्यवसं मुने ।।७४।।

Saying so, the wise God of Dharma, Yam, vanished from sight from there. Oh Narad! I am that king who has become an owl[1] (73). I have suffered from the consequences of my lowly, sinful, pervert and wicked deeds[2] against the devout Hari Mitra. Oh sage! After that, I began to pass my days living in the cave of this mountain as ordained by Yam (74). [73-74]

[1]सोऽहं नारद भूपालः पुरेदानीमुलूकताम्, [2]लब्धवान्कर्मदोषेण

पूर्वो मृतकदेहो मे भक्षणाय ह्युपस्थितः ।
क्षुधन्वितोऽहं तं देहं खादितुं ह्युपचक्रमे ।।७५।।
तत्क्षणं दैवयोगेन हरिमित्रो महायशाः ।
विमानेनार्कवर्णेन स्तूमयमानोऽप्सरागणैः ।।७६।।

My earlier dead body appeared before me so that I can feed upon it. When overcome by hunger I was about to take my first pick at that dead body (75), at that very instant, by some stroke of good fortune, the most glorious and famous Hari Mitra came there aboard a plane that was radiant and illuminated like the splendorous sun. He was surrounded and was being praised by Apsaras (the courtesans of the heaven) (76). [75-76]

विष्णुदूतैः परिवृतः पथा तेनागतौ नृप ।
विष्णुभक्तो महातेजाः पथि मां दृष्ट्वान्प्रभुः ।।७७।।
भुवनेशशरीरन्मद्दर्शोलूक सन्निधौ ।
पृष्टोऽहं तेन दयया शवसन्निधिसंस्थितः ।।७८।।

He was surrounded and attended to by messengers and attendants of Vishnu. He came my way. When that most glorious, radiant and great devotee of Vishnu saw me on his path (77) standing as an owl in the front of the dead body of king Bhuvnesh, he asked me with compassion— (78). [77-78]

भुवनेशस्य नृपतेर्देहोऽयं दृश्यते खग ।
उलूकत्वं च किमिदं खादिन्तु चोद्यते भवान् ।।७९।।

'Oh bird! This appears to be the body of the king Bhuvnesh. And how and why is an owl getting ready to eat it?' (79).

तच्छ्रुत्वा हरिमित्राय प्रणम्य विनयान्वितः ।
कृताञ्जलिपुटोभूत्वा बहुमानपुरःसरम् ।।८०।।
तत्सर्वं पूर्ववृत्तान्तं नारदास्मै न्यवेदयम् ।
पुरापराधं त्वयि यत्तस्य पाकोऽयमागतः ।।८१।।

At this, that owl bowed before Hari Mitra and told him the entire episode most respectfully with joined hands (80), 'This is the punishment I am getting for my offences that I have committed against you earlier (81). [80-81]

यावन्मन्वतरं विप्रखादिष्यामि शवं त्विमम् ।
ततः श्वाह भविष्यामि भविष्यामि ततो नरः ।।८२।।

Oh Brahmin! I am condemned to eat this corpse for 1 Manwantar. Then I shall become a dog[1] and finally a human once again[2]' (82).

[1]श्वाह भविष्यामि, [2]भविष्यामि ततो नरः

एतदाकर्ण्य करुणो हरिमित्रमहायशाः ।
कृपया मां समाचष्ट शृणूलूक महीपते ।।८३।।
मयि त्वयापराधं यत्तत्सर्वं क्षान्तवानमहम् ।
शवो ह्यदर्शनं यातु न च श्वा त्वं भविष्यसि ।।८४।।

The renowned and most compassionate and merciful Hari Mitra[1] heard this with regret and said to me gracefully and with kindness in his heart[2], 'Oh king who has unfortunately fallen on bad times and have become an owl[3]. Listen to me (83). I hereby forgive you for all the offences and sins that you have committed against me[4]. Let this corpse vanish from sight[5] and you will also not have to become a dog anymore[6] (84). [83-84]

[1]करुणो हरिमित्रमहायशाः, [2]कृपया मां, [3]समाचष्ट महीपते, [4]त्वयापराधं यत्तत्सर्वं क्षान्तवानमहम्, [5]शवो ह्यदर्शनं यातु, [6]न च श्वा त्वं भविष्यसि

त्वामाद्य गानयोगश्च प्राप्नोतु मत्प्रसादतः ।
स्तुहि विष्णुं च गानेन जिह्वा स्पष्टा च जायताम् ।।८५।।
सुरविद्याधराणां च गन्धर्वाप्सरसां तथा ।
गानाचार्यो भवेथास्त्वं भक्ष्यभोज्यसमन्वितः ।।८६।।
ततः कतिपयाहोर्भिः सर्व भद्रं भविष्यति ।८६½।

By my blessings, you would acquire the skills of singing, and your

tongue will be clear and articulate in singing the glories and praises of Lord Vishnu[1] (85). You shall be honoured by being acclaimed as a patron teacher of singers[2]. You shall be an expert in the finer intricacies and nuances of music and singing[3]. You shall be a music teacher for the Gods, Vidhyadhars (senior demi-Gods) Gandharvas and Apsaras[4], and you shall have different varieties of food to eat (86). Then after some time, everything will become alright and your sufferings would end' (86½). [85-86½]

[1]स्तुहि विष्णुं च गानेन जिह्वा स्पष्टा, [2]गानाचार्यो, [3]सुरविद्याधराणां, [4]गन्धर्वाप्सरसां,

हरिमित्रवचस्तच्च विष्णुदूतोपबृंहितम् ।।८७।।
सर्वं निरयसंघं मेक्षणादेव व्यनाशयत् ।
प्रकृत्या विष्णुभक्तानामीदृशी करुणा द्विज ।।८८।।

When Hari Mitra said these words of blessings and reassurance in favour of the owl in the presence of the messengers of Vishnu (who were accompanying him as escort and became a witness of this forgiveness and blessing) (87), then all the hell-like environment[1] disappears instantly. Oh Brahmin (Narad)! This is the natural merciful, benevolent and compassionate temperament of the devotees of Lord Vishnu[2] (88). [87-88]

[1]निरयसंघं, [2]प्रकृत्या विष्णुभक्तानामीदृशी करुणा

कृतोपराधलोकानामपि दुखं व्यपोहति ।
अमृतस्यन्दि वचनमुक्त्वा स प्रययौ हरिम् ।।८९।।

They removed the sorrows and torments of even those who are great offenders. After saying these reassuring, soothing and elixir-like words, he (Hari Mitra) went away to the abode of Hari (Vishnu) (89).

सर्वं ते कथितं येन गानाचार्योऽहमुत्तमः ।
प्राप्स्यामि हरिमेतेन हरिमित्रप्रसादतः ।।९०।।

I've told you everything about the way I've attained this exalted stature and honour of being the best expert in the art, craft and skill of melodious music and singing of devotional songs. I shall surely attain Hari (Vishnu) by the virtue of the blessings of (the merciful, compassionate, broad-hearted and benevolent devotee of the Lord, named) Hari Mitra (90).

नारदैतदनुवर्णितं मयापूर्वजन्मचरितं महाद्भुतम् ।
यः श्रृणोति हरिमेत्य चेतसा स प्रयाति भवनं गदाभृतः ।।९१।।

Oh Narad! I have described to you the most magnificent and strange episode pertaining to my earlier life. Any person who hears it with a devoted mind focused upon Hari is sure to attain/reach the abode of the Lord (i.e., he shall go to heaven and get liberation and deliverance from this mundane world) (91).

Thus ends Canto 6 of the great epic Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the episode of Narad cursing Laxmi and how he had to go to an owl to learn devotional music.

——*—*

Canto 7
Narad learns the intricate skills of singing from the Owl

This Canto describes the basic rules to follow if one wishes to be an expert singer (verse nos. 5-12). After learning the art and skill of singing from the owl known as Gaanbandhu, sage Narad proceeded to vanquish his arch rival Tumbru whose honouring by Vishnu had incited anger, jealously and vengeance in him. At Tumbru's place, he saw a fantastic sight —a huge throng of men and women with disfigured and mutilated bodies; they were the different notes, modes and tunes of classical music personified. When asked by him the cause for their deformities, they informed him that his mismatched, out of tune and out of beat and rhythm singing has resulted in their miserable condition. Thus rebuked at his false pride of being a good singer, good enough to challenge Tumbru, Narad felt crestfallen. He despondently went to Vishnu, full of dejection. The Lord then advised him to roam around singing his glories till the time of Lord Krishna's incarnation when Vishnu, as Krishna, would fulfill all his desires. Meanwhile, Narad roamed in the world singing the glories of the Lord on the lute. Finally, Lord

Krishna taught him and then blessed him.

गानबन्धुः पुनः प्राह नारदं मुनिसत्तमम् ।
एते किन्नरसंघा वै विद्याध्रात्सरसां गणाः ।।१।।
गानाचर्यामुलूकं मां गानशिक्षार्थमागताः ।
तपसा नैव शक्त्या वा गानविद्या तपोधन ।।२।।

Gaanbandhu (the owl) again said to Narad who was a great sag and one of the best amongst them[1], 'These groups of Kinnars, Vidyadhars and Apsaras (1) came to me, who am the 'Acharya' (i.e., the most wise, skill, expert and the senior most teacher) of the art and skill of music and singing[2], for the purpose of learning these intricate arts. Oh a treasury of Tapa[3] (i.e., one who has done a lot of austerity, observed penances and have kept stern religious vows)! The knowledge of music and the art of singing called 'Gaan Vidya[4]' cannot be acquired by doing Tapa (because it requires practical training and practice, besides the involvement of the emotions of the heart and memorising of the verses needed for singing a song) (2). [1-2]

[1]नारदं मुनिसत्तमम्, [2]गानाचर्या, [3]तपोधन, [4]गानविद्या

तस्माच्छ्रमेण युक्तश्च मत्तस्त्वं गानमाप्नुहि ।
एवमुक्तो मुनिस्तस्मै प्रणिपत्य जगौ यथा ।।३।।

Hence, you must learn the skills of music and singing from me with due diligence and sincerity'. When he (Gaanbandhu, the musician owl) said so, Narad reverentially prostrated before him and did as he was told (3).

तच्छृणुष्व मुनिश्रेष्ठ वासुदेवं नमस्य च ।
उलूकेनैवमुक्तस्तु नारदो मुनिसत्तमः ।।४।।
शिक्षाक्रमेण संयुक्तस्तत्र गानमशिक्षयत् ।४½।

[Sage Valmiki said to his disciple sage Bharadwaj as follows—] 'Oh exalted sage! Narad, the great sage, bowed before Vasudeo and followed the instructions (4). He began to systematically learn music and singing (4½). [4-4½]

गानबन्धुस्तमाहेदं त्यक्तलज्जो भवाधुना ।।५।।
स्त्रीसंगमे तथा गीते क्षुतेऽन्वाख्यानसंगमे ।

व्यवहारे च धान्यानामर्थानां च तथैव च ।।६।।
आयेव्यये तथा नित्यं त्यक्तलज्जस्तु वै भवेत् ।६½।

Gaanbandhu advised him (Narad) that he should shed feeling shy and reluctant[1] (5). One should not be shy and feel hesitant or reluctant while having intimate moments with a woman (e.g., a wife)[2], while singing[3], while sneezing (i.e., one should not suppress a sneeze because he is in the company of others and feels embarrassed)[4], while debating[5], while dealing with matters pertaining to agricultural produce and finance[6] (6), and in regular commercial matters relating to income and expenditure[7] (6½). [5-6½]

[1]त्यक्तलज्जो, [2]स्त्रीसंगमे, [3]गीते, [4]क्षुते, [5]ऽन्वाख्यानसंगमे, [6]धान्यानामर्थानां, [7]आयेव्यये,

न कुण्ठितेन तथा गूढेन नित्यं प्रावरणादिभिः ।।७।।
हस्तविक्षेपभावेन व्यादितास्येन चैव हि ।
निर्यातजिह्वायोगेन गेयं च कथञ्चन ।।८।।

One should not sing in a coarse or blunt voice[1], or in a deep, grunt like, an inaudible, murmuring and conspiratorial voice[2], or in a place that is small, dense and thickly covered (because the sound will be muffled and suppressed)[3] (7), or with hands spread out[4] and mouth wide open[5], or with a protruding tongue which is held outside the mouth or dangling from it[6] (8). [7-8]

[1]कुण्ठितेन, [2]गूढेन, [3]प्रावरणादिभिः, [4]हस्तविक्षेप, [5]व्यादितास्येन, [6]निर्यातजिह्वायोगेन

स्वाङ्ग निरीक्षमाणेन परमप्रेक्षता तथा ।
न गायेदूर्ध्वबाहुश्च नोर्ध्वदृष्टिः कथञ्चन ।।९।।
हासो भयं क्षुधा कम्पः शोकोऽन्यस्य स्मृतिस्तृषा।
नैतानि सत्परूपाणि गानयोगे महामते ।।१०।।

One should not sing while looking attentively at the part of one's own body[1] or at the body of someone who is very near and dear and loving to the singer[2]. One should also not sing with a raised hand[3] or while looking upwards[4] (9). Similarly, singing is to be avoided while shaking with laughter[5] or trembling with fear[6] and hunger[7], while one is under mental distress and is feeling sorrowful[8], while one is thinking of someone else or when his mind and attention is focused in the memory of someone who is dear to him[9], and also while one is thirsty[10] (because all these distract him) (10). [9-10]

[1]स्वाङ्ग निरीक्षमाणेन, [2]परमप्रेक्षता, [3]गायेदूर्ध्वबाहुश्च, [4]नोर्ध्वदृष्टिः, [5]हासो, [6]भयं, [7]क्षुधा कम्पः,

[8]शोको, [9]ऽन्यस्य स्मृति, [10]स्तृषा,

नैकहस्तेन शस्येत तालसंघट्टन मुने ।
क्षुधार्तेन भयार्तेन तृषार्तेन तथैव च ।।११।।
गानयोगो न कर्तव्यो नान्धकारे कथञ्चन ।
एवमादीनि योग्यानि कर्तव्यानि महामुने ।।१२।।

Oh sage! It is not advisable to sing while keeping the beat of the rhythm with only one hand (i.e., both the hands are needed to keep the beat of the rhythm, e.g., clapping of the cymbal)[1]. One who is distressed or tormented by hunger[2], fear[3] and/or thirst[4] is never advised to sing (11). Similarly, one should never sing in the darkness[5]. Oh great sage, this is how a singer should carefully discriminate between the proper and the improper method, circumstance and environment necessary for good singing (12). [11-12]

[1]नैकहस्तेन शस्येत तालसंघट्टन, [2]क्षुधार्तेन, [3]भयार्तेन, [4]तृषार्तेन, [5]नान्धकारे

[Note :- Verse nos. 5-12 prescribes the proper method of singing. A careful reading of these verses shows that any kind of distraction, whether mental or physical, will cause a hindrance in one concentrating on singing. The singing will therefore be affected. Hence, all types of distractions act as an impediment to proper singing, and should be avoided if one is to sing immaculately and in a perfect manner.]

एवमुक्तः स भगवान्नारदो विधिरक्षणे ।
अशिक्षत्तथा गीतं दिव्यवर्षसहस्रकम् ।।१३।।
ततः समस्तसम्पन्नो गीतप्रस्तावकादिषु ।
विपंच्यादिषु सम्पन्नः सर्वस्वरविभागवित ।।१४।।

Under his tutelage, advise and guidance, Lord Narad studied, learnt and practiced the art and skill of singing along with the intricacies and finer nuances of music systemically for a thousand glorious years[1] (13). With this rigorous training, he became well versed with all the aspects of singing, including the initial warm-up phases[2], besides learning all the notes of the Indian lute[3] (14). [13-14]

[1]गीतं दिव्यवर्षसहस्रकम्, [2]गीतप्रस्तावकादिषु, [3]विपंच्यादिषु सम्पन्नः सर्वस्वरविभागवित

अयुतानि च षट्त्रिंशत्सहस्राणि शतानि च।
स्वराणां भेदयोगेन ज्ञातवान्मुनिसत्तम ।।१५।।
ततो गन्धर्वसंघाश्च किन्नराणां तथा गणाः ।

मुनिना सह संयुक्ता प्रीतियुक्तास्तु तेऽभवन् ।।१६।।

That exalted sage learnt well all the forty six thousand[1] fine shades of the notes, modes and tunes of Indian classical music tradition[2] (15). The throng of celestial musicians and singers, such as Gandharvas and Kinnars respectively, lived happily with the sage (Narad) and enjoyed his company (16). [15-16]

[1]षट्त्रिंशत्सहस्राणि, [2]स्वराणां भेदयोगेन ज्ञातवान्म

गानबन्धुं मुनिः प्राह प्राप्य गानमुत्तमम् ।
त्वां समासाध सम्पन्नं त्वं हि गीतविशारदः ।।१७।।

The sage (Narad) said to Gaanbandhu, his teacher, the owl, 'I have accomplished success in acquiring expertise in all the aspects and nuances of classical music. I bless you that you would be prosperous[1] and famous and most acclaimed in the field of singing and music[2] (17).

[1]सम्पन्नं, [2]गीतविशारदः,

गानबन्धुस्ततः प्राह नारदं मुनिपुङ्गवम् ।।१८।।
ब्रह्मणो दिवसे ब्रह्मन्मनवः स्युश्चतुर्दश ।
ततस्त्रैलोक्यसम्प्लावो भविष्यति महामुने ।।१९।।
तावन्मे स्याद्यशोभागस्तावन्मे परमं शुभम् ।
मनसाध्यापितं मे स्याद्दाक्षिण्यान्मुनिसत्तमः ।।२०।।

Then Gaanbandhu replied to the most exalted sage, 'Oh Narad! (18). All the 3 Lokas (the terrestrial, subterranean and celestial worlds) would be submerged in the great doomsday deluge appearing[1] after the life cycle of 14 Manus have come to an end in a time span equivalent to 1 day of Brahma, the creator[2] (19)—let my auspicious fame and good name last till that time. Oh the exalted sage! Let me be blessed with skill, expertise, wisdom, deftness, cleverness and intelligence automatically, i.e., without my making any special efforts to acquire these virtues; let these qualities become natural to me[3] (20). [18-20]

[1]ततस्त्रैलोक्यसम्प्लावो, [2]ब्रह्मणो दिवसे ब्रह्मन्मनवः स्युश्चतुर्दश, [3]मनसाध्यापितं मे स्याद्दाक्षिण्या

उलूकं प्राह देवर्षि सर्वं तेऽस्तु मनोगतम् ।
अतीते कल्पसंयोगे गरुड़स्त्वं भविष्यसि ।।२१।।
गुणगानाच्युतस्य सायुज्यं तस्य लप्स्यसे ।

स्वस्ति तेस्तु महाप्राज्ञ गमिष्यामि प्रसीद मे ।।२२।।

The celestial sage of the Gods (i.e., Narad)[1] said to the legendary owl (Gaanbandhu, his teacher)[2], 'All your wishes would be fulfilled. After the expiry of 1 Kalpa[3], you would be transformed into the legendary Garud (the eagle or heron who is the mount of Lord Vishnu) (21). You will attain the privilege of having the rare form of salvation called Saujya[4] as a reward of praising the glories of the Lord who is eternal, imperishable, untainted, faultless and steady (called Achutya)[5] by the medium of your devotional songs. Oh the most wise, erudite and enlightened one[6]! May you have auspiciousness and all round welfare[7]! I shall go away from your hermitage now. Be always cheerful and happy[8]' (22). [21-22]

[1]देवर्षि, [2]उलूकं, [3]अतीते कल्पसंयोगे, [4]सायुज्यं, [5]आच्युतस्य, [6]महाप्राज्ञ, [7]स्वस्ति तेस्तु, [8]प्रसीद मे

[Note :- The Saujya form of salvation is one in which the devotee lives very near his God.]

एवमुक्त्वा ययौ विप्रो जेतुं तुम्बुरुमुत्तमम् ।
तुम्बुरोश्च गृहाभ्याशे ददर्श विकृताकृतीन् ।।२३।।
कृत्ताबाहूरुपादांश्च कृतनासाक्षिवक्षसः ।
कृतोत्तमांगांगुलींश्च छिन्नभिन्नकलेवरान् ।।२४।।
पुंसः स्त्रियश्च विकृतान्ददर्शायुतशो बहून् ।
नारदेन च ते प्रोक्ताः के यूयं कृतविग्रहाः ।।२५।।

Saying this, the Brahmin (Narad) went to the exalted Tumbru to trounce him[1] (in a music and song competition). When Narad came to Tumbru's place, he saw a most amazing and stunningly mysterious sight —he saw numerous people, both men and women, with deformed, disfigured, mutilated and dismembered bodies[2] (23). Some had their hands, legs, thighs, noses, breasts and heads cut off, others had their fingers and other parts of the body either severed or deformed and disfigured[3] (24). Dazed, surprised and mystified, Narad asked them, 'Who has rendered your bodies to such a horrible condition?' (25). [23-25]

[1]जेतुं, [2]विकृताकृतीन्, [3]छिन्नभिन्नकलेवरान्,

नारदं प्रोचुरपि ते त्वया कृताङ्गका वयम् ।
वयं रागाश्च रागिण्योगानेन भिन्नसन्धिना ।।२६।।

भवता गीयते यर्हि तर्ह्यवस्येदृशी हि नः ।
पुनस्तुम्बुरुगानेनच्छिन्नभिन्न प्ररोहणम् ।।२७।।

When Narad asked them, all replied together, 'You are the one who have made our bodies deformed, disfigured, mutilated or dismembered. We are the personifications of the different tunes and modes of music[1]. When you sing out of tune and beat[2] (26), we are symbolically reduced to this horrible state[3]. Again, when the masterTumbru sings, our decrepit bodies are restored back to their former selves (27). [26-27]

[1]रागाश्च रागिण्योगानेन, [2]भिन्नसन्धिना, [3]यर्हि तर्ह्यवस्येदृशी

तुम्बुरुर्जीवयत्येष त्वं मारयसि नारद ।
तदाश्चर्य महद्दृष्ट्वा श्रुत्वा च विस्मयान्वितः ।।२८।।

Oh Narad! You torment us while Tumbru revives us and gives us solace and succour'. Narad was utterly confounded and perplexed at this great, strange and mysterious happening and the sight which he beheld (28).

धिग्धगुक्त्वा जगामाथ नारदोऽपि जनार्दनम् ।
श्वेतद्वीपे स भगवाः न्नारदं प्राह माधवः ।।२९।।
गानबन्धौ च यद्गानं न चैतेनासि पारगः ।
तुम्बुरोः सदृशो नासि गानेनानेन नारद ।।३०।।

Embarrassed, exasperated, disdainful and contrite, Narad went to Janardan (literally, the merciful Lord who is king and gracious towards his followers; here meaning Lord Vishnu). The Lord was in an island called Shwetdwip (literally meaning the white island, or one inhabited by fair skinned people). He said to Narad (29), 'You have still not become fully enlightened and haven't reached the zenith or pinnacle[1] of singing and music even after learning it from Gaanbandhu for such a long time. Oh Narad! In the skills of music and song, you haven't reached the same high standard and have not achieved the same high stature as obtained by Tumbru (i.e., you are no match for him) (30). [29-30]

[1]चैतेनासि पारगः

मनोर्वैवस्वतस्याहमष्टाविंशतिमे युगे ।
द्वापरान्ते भविष्यामि यदुवंशकुलोद्भवः ।।३१।।
देवक्यां वसुदेवस्य कृष्णो नाम्ना महामुने ।

तदानीं मां समागम्य स्मारयैतद्यथातथम् ।।३२।।

In the 28th Yug (a mythological measurement of time, called a Yug) of Manu named Vaivaswat Manu[1], at the end of Dwapar (the 3rd of the 4-Yug celestial cycle)[2], I shall manifest myself in the clan of Yadus (cow herds)[3] (31). I shall be born to Deoki and Vasudeo, and my name shall be Krishna[4]. Oh great sage! Come to me at that time and remind me of this topic or episode (32). [31-32]

[1]ष्टाविंशतिमे युगे, [2]मनोर्वैवस्वत, [3]द्वापरान्ते, [4]यदुवंशकुलोद्भवः

तत्र त्वां गानसम्पन्नं करिष्यामि महाव्रत ।
तुम्बुरोश्च समं चैव तथातिशयसंयुतम् ।।३३।।
तावत्कालं यथायोगं देवगन्धर्वयोनिषु ।
शिक्ष त्वं हि यथान्यायमित्युक्त्वान्तरधीयते ।।३४।।

Oh the one who is very steadfast in keeping vows, a person known as 'Mahavrat'[1]! At that time, I shall bless you with the honour of having the best knowledge pertaining to music and song. You would not only become equal to Tumbru but even better than him (33). Up till then, you assume the mantle of a Gandharva (celestial musician)[2] and teach or preach others according to time and circumstance'. Saying this, the Lord disappeared from sight (34). [33-34]

[1]देवगन्धर्वयोनिषु, [2]शिक्ष त्वं हि यथान्यायमि

ततो मुनिः प्रणम्यैनं वीणावादनतत्परः ।
देवर्षिर्देवसंकाशः सर्वाभरणभूषितः ।।३५।।
तपसां निधिरत्यर्थं वासुदेवपरायणः ।
स्कन्धे विपञ्चीमाधाय सर्वलोकाञ्चचार सः ।।३६।।

The sage bowed before him (Vishnu) and began to sing on his lute. Ever since that time, the celestial sage of the Gods (Narad) became adorned with divine ornaments[1] (befitting his stature as a celestial singer of Gods, or in his new form as a Gandharva) (35). He did Tapa (i.e., kept religious vows, did penances and austerities) to such an extent that he literally became a storehouse or a 'treasury of Tapa'[2]. He was very devoted to Vasudeo (Vishnu)[3]. Holding his lute on his shoulders[4], he wandered in all the worlds[5], singing the divine glories of the Lord as ordered by him (36). [35-36]

[1]सर्वाभरणभूषितः, [2]तपसां निधि, [3]वासुदेवपरायणः, [4]स्कन्धे विपञ्चीमाधाय, [5]सर्वलोकाञ्चचार सः

वारुणं याम्यमाग्नेयमैन्द्रं कौबेरमेव च ।
वायव्यं च तथैशानं संशशं प्राप्य धर्मवित् ।।३७।।
गायमाने हरिं सम्यग्वीणावाद विचक्षणः ।
गन्धर्वाप्सरसां संघैः पूज्यमानस्ततस्ततः ।।३८।।

Feeling mentally perturbed[1], that righteous sage[2] roamed around in the abodes of various Gods such as Varun (the God of water), Yam (the God of death and Dharma), Indra (the king of Gods) and Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) located in the different directions of the heaven, such as the northwest[3] and the northeast[4] (37).

He was an expert singer on the Indian lute[5], and so he sang the glories of Hari (Vishnu) during his wanderings. Because of his expertise in the singing of devotional hymns dedicated to Hari, he was welcomed and adored, honoured and worshipped[6] wherever he went by hordes of Gandharvas and Apsaras (celestial musicians and courtesans respectively) (38). [37-38]

[1]संशशं प्राप्य, [2]धर्मवित्, [3]वायव्यं, [4]तथैशानं, [5]सम्यग्वीणावाद, [6]पूज्यमान

ब्रह्मलोकं समासाद्य कस्मिंश्चित्कालपर्यये ।
हाहा हूहूश्च गन्धर्वो गीतवाद्यविशारदौ ।।३९।।
ब्रह्मणो गायकौ दिव्यौ नित्यं गन्धर्वसत्तमौ।
तत्र ताभ्यां समासाद्य गायमानो हरि विभुम् ।।४०।।

He came to Brahm Loka (the abode of Brahma, the creator). There he joined a Gandharva named 'Haha Huhu'[1], who was a great expert in singing and playing of musical instrument[2] (39), and he used to sing the praises and divine glories in honour of Hari (Vishnu), also known as 'Vibho'[3] which means the supreme, inprishable, almighty, omnipresent, all-pervading and eternal Lord, there (40). [39-40]

[1]हाहा हूहूश्च गन्धर्वो, [2]गीतवाद्यविशारदौ, [3]हरि विभुम्

ब्रह्मणा च महातेजाः पूजितो मुनिसत्तमः ।
तं प्रणम्य महात्मानं सर्वलोकपितामहम् ।।४१।।
चचार च यथाकामं सर्वलोकेषु नारदः ।
पुनः कालेन महता गृहं प्राप्य च तुम्बुरोः ।।४२।।

The exalted sage (Narad) was welcomed and honoured, worshipped and shown great respect[1] by the most radiant and

glorious Brahma, the creator[2]. After sometime, bidding farewell to the great Brahma, the grand father and patriarch of all the creation[3] and the most exalted soul of it[4] (41), Narad resumed his wanderings in all the worlds, roaming everywhere voluntarily and as he wished[5]. By and by, after a long period of time[6], he came to Tumbru's house[7] (42). [41-42]

[1]पूजितो मुनिसत्तमः, [2]ब्रह्मणा च महातेजाः, [3]सर्वलोकपितामहम्, [4]महात्मानं, [5]चचार च यथाकामं सर्वलोकेषु नारदः, [6]पुनः कालेन महता, [7]गृहं प्राप्य च तुम्बुरोः

वीणामादाय तत्रस्थस्तत्रस्थैरप्यलक्षितः ।
सुरकन्याश्च तत्रस्थाः षडाद्याः सहधैवताः ।।४३।।
व्रीडितो भगवान्दृष्ट्वा निर्गतश्च सत्वरम् ।
शिक्षयामास बहुशस्तत्र तत्र महामुनिः ।।४४।।

Not seen by others, he came in secretly. Celestial damsels, named Dhaivat and Shadaj, among others, were present there (43). As soon as he saw them, he felt very ashamed and embarrassed, and immediately went out from the place. Meanwhile, the great sage roamed around here and there, preaching and teaching everywhere (44). [43-44]

[Note :- These verses show that Narad stealthily came to visit Tumbru, but when he found that his presence has become known to the two celestial Apsaras, he felt very humiliated and embarrassed, for he feared that his secret visit would now become public and he will be subject to scorn and further ridicule. That is why he went away silently without meeting Tumbru.]

कालेऽतीते ततो विष्णुरवतीर्णो जगन्मयः।
देवक्या वसुदेवस्य यादवोऽसौ महाद्युतिः ।।४५।।
सप्तस्वराङ्गना द्रंष्टुं गानविद्याविशारदः ।
ययौ रैवतके कृष्ण प्रणिपत्य महामुनिः ।।४६।।

After the passage of a long time, in the household of Vasudeo of the Yadav race, from the womb of his wife Deoki, the most glorious, radiant and splendours[1] Vishnu revealed himself as an incarnation[2] (as Krishna) (45). Hearing that Sri Krishna could use all the seven notes of the Indian classical music (while playing on his legendary flute) as well as on observing his body as a perfect image having a perfect resemblance to Vishnu[3], that gentleman who was an expert in the art and skill of singing and music[4] (i.e., Narad), went to meet Lord Krishna on Mt.

Raivatak[5]. The great sage prostrated before him[6] (46). [45-46]

[1]महाद्युतिः, [2]विष्णुरवतीर्णो, [3]सप्तस्वराङ्गना, [4]गानविद्याविशारदः, [5]रैवतके, [6]प्रणिपत्य महामुनिः

व्यज्ञापयदशेषं तच्छ्वेतद्वीपे त्वया पुरा ।
नारायणेन कथितं गानयोगार्थमुत्तमम् ।।४७।।

He (Narad) reminded him (Krishna) of the assurance given by the latter to him earlier as Narayan (Vishnu) when they had met on the Shwetdwip (see verse nos. 31-32) that he would not only be acquainted with but also blessed and empowered with the best form of music and singing skills (47).

तच्छ्रुत्वा प्रहसन्कृष्णः प्राह जाम्बवती मुदा ।
एवं मुनिवरं भद्रे शिक्षयस्व यथाविधि ।।४८।।
वीणागानसमायोगे तथेत्याह च सा पतिम् ।
प्रहसन्ती यथायोगं शिक्षयामास तं मुनिम् ।।४९।।

Hearing this reminder, Sri Krishna smiled and said cheerfully to Jamvati (one of his consorts, the daughter of Jamvant, the legendary bear king famous in the story of Ramayan), 'Oh lady! Impart the desired knowledge to this sage. Teach him the proper and perfect way to sing devotional songs (48) using the Indian lute.' Accepting these instructions from her husband, she cheerfully began to impart the required knowledge (i.e., the art and skill of singing on the lute) to the sage (49). [48-49]

ततः संवत्सरे पूर्णे नारदं प्राह केशवः ।
सत्याः समीपमागच्छ शिक्षस्व तथा पुनः ।।५०।।

When a year had passed by, Keshav (Krishna) said to Narad, 'Now go to Satya and learn further from her' (50).

[Note :- Satya is another name for Satyabhama, one of the other consorts of Krishna.]

तथेत्युक्त्वा सत्यभामां प्रणिपत्य ययौ मुनिः ।
तथा स शिक्षितो विद्वान्पूर्णे संवत्सरे ततः ।।५१।।

Saying alright, the sage went to pay his obeisance to Satyabhama. She also taught him for a year (51).

वासुदेवनियुक्तोऽसौ रुक्मिण्याः सदनं गतः।
अंगनाभिस्तत्रत्याभिर्दासीभिर्मुनिसत्तमः ।।५२।।

Then, on the instructions of Krishna, the most exalted sage (Narad)

went to the palace of Rukmani (the chief consort of Krishna). Numerous maid servants were present there, serving her (52).

उक्तौऽसौ गायमानोऽपि न स्वरं वेत्सि वै मुने ।
ततः श्रमेण महता यावत्संवत्सरद्वयम् ।।५३।।
शिक्षितोऽसौ तदा देव्या रुक्मिण्याधिजगौ मुनिः ।
न तु स्वराङ्गनाः प्राप तन्त्रीयोगे महामुनिः ।।५४।।

When she taught music, the sage couldn't gather or understand and learn the different notes, modes and tunes of music having fine shades of differences and variations that she taught[1]. Inspite of his lack of acumen and aptitude in learning music, she persisted with her teaching and made great efforts and continued to teach him for two years[2], diligently and sincerely[3] (53). By the great efforts made by Rukmani, Narad at last began to sing better, but he still could not master the art and skill of playing the stringed musical instruments[4] as they ought to be played with perfection (54). [53-54]

[1]गायमानोऽपि न स्वरं वेत्सि वै, [2]यावत्संवत्सरद्वयम्, [3]श्रमेण महता, [4]न तु स्वराङ्गनाः प्राप तन्त्रीयोगे

आहूय कृष्णो भगवान्स्वयमेव महामुनिम् ।
अशिक्षयदमेयात्मा गानयोगमनुत्तमम ।।५५।।

Then Lord Krishna called the great sage and began to tech him personally the best form of devotional music and song (55).

कृष्णदत्तेन गानेन तस्यायाताः स्वराङ्गनाः ।
ब्रह्मानन्दः समभ्सवन्नारदस्य च चेतसि ।।५६।।

When Krishna taught him personally, then all the arts and skills pertaining to the realm of music and song came there in a personified but subtle form and were made available to Narad (i.e., he was finally able to access, grasp or learn the finer nuances of classical music)[1]. At this success, Narad's mind was ecstatic with joy and he felt exhilarated and fulfilled[2] (56).

[1]तस्यायाताः, [2]ब्रह्मानन्दः च चेतसि

ततो द्वेषादयो दोषाः सर्वे अस्तं गता द्विज ।
ईर्ष्या च तुम्बुरौ यासीन्नारदस्य च सा गता ।।५७।।

With this enlightenment (or should be say, the 'blessings' of Lord Krishna), all the blights on the character[1] of the sage, such as having

hatred, animosity, intolerance and ill-will[2], subsided or were completely eliminated from his nature[3]. The jealously and malice[4] that he had for Tumbru also disappeared[5] (57).

[1]दोषाः, [2]द्वेषा, [3]अस्तं गता, [4]ईर्ष्या, [5]सा गता

ततो ननतं देवर्षि प्रणिपत्य जनार्दनम् ।
उवाच च ह्यषीकेशः सर्वज्ञस्त्वं महामुने ।।५८।।

Then the celestial sage of the Gods (Narad) reverentially prostrated[1] before Janardan (Krishna) and began to dance in ecstasy[2]. Hrishikesh (Krishna) blessed him, saying, 'Oh great sage! You have become omniscient and all knowing now[3]! (58).

[1]प्रणिपत्य, [2]ननतं, [3]सर्वज्ञस्त्वं

[Note :- The words Janardan and Hrishikesh are used for Vishnu. Their use here shows that Krishna and Vishnu are the same Lords.]

प्राचीनगानयोगेन गायस्व मम सन्निधौ ।
एतत्ते प्रार्थितं प्राप्तं मम लोके तथैव च ।।५९।।
नित्यं तुम्बुरुणा सार्द्ध गायस्व य यथातथम् ।
एवमुक्तो मुनिस्तत्र तथायोगं चचार सः ।।६०।।

Sing in the ancient skill and art called music and singing[1] in my presence (or, in my company)[2]. I have told you the way to reach my abode in the heaven (59). You should sing (devotional songs) regularly in the company of Tumbru also[3]'. On this advise of Krishna, the sage roamed everywhere (where Krishna stayed and where Tumbru lived), free from all the mental tensions and blights that had been overshadowing him till now[4] (60). [59-60]

[1]प्राचीनगानयोगेन गायस्व, [2]मम सन्निधौ, [3]नित्यं तुम्बुरुणा सार्द्ध गायस्व, [4]एवमुक्तो

[Note :- By saying 'where Krishna and Tumbru lives', the narrator of this epic, sage Valmiki means that Narad henceforth sang the glories of the Lord wherever there were devotees of the Lord, wherever the Lord was worshipped, such as temples, pilgrim sites and households of great devotees.]

तथा सम्पूजयेत्कृष्णं रुद्रं भुवननायकम् ।
तदा जगौ हरेस्तत्र नियोगाच्छंकरालये ।।६१।।
रुक्मिण्या सत्यया सार्द्ध जाम्बवत्या महामुनिः ।
कृष्णेन च द्विजश्रेष्ठ श्रतिजातिविशारदः ।।६२।।

Then he (Narad) duly worshipped Rudra (Lord Shiva) and Sri Krishna who was the Lord of the world[1]. After that, he proceeded to the abode of Har (Shiva)[2] (61). Oh the most exalted sage (Bharadwaj)[3]! The great sage (Narad)[4], who was by now an expert singer and most skilled in the science and craft of music and song[5], was accompanied by Rukmani, Satyabhama, Jamvanti and Lord Krishna himself* (62). [61-62]

[1]भुवननायकम् कृष्णं रुद्रं, [2]हरेस्तत्र, [3]द्विजश्रेष्ठ, [4]महामुनिः, [5]श्रतिजातिविशारदः

[Note :- (i) This story is being narrated to sage Bharadwaj by sage Valmiki. So there appears to be a pause here in the narration in verse no. 61. *(ii) We can also read verse no. 62 as follows— 'The great sage Narad 'महामुने', who was a most exalted Brahmin 'द्विजश्रेष्ठ' and an expert in the skill of music and singing in his race 'श्रतिजातिविशारदः', was accompanied by Rukmani, Satyabhama, Jamvanti and Krishna while he sang devotional songs'.]

एवं तं मुनिशार्दूल प्रोक्तो गीतक्रमो मया ।
ब्राह्मणो वासुदेवाख्यं गायमानोऽनिशं द्विज ।।६३।।
हरेः सायुज्यमाप्नोति सर्वयज्ञफलं लभेत् ।
अत्यथा नरकं गच्छेद्गायमानोऽन्यदेव हि ।।६४।।

[Sage Valmiki continued with his narration. He said to Bharadwaj—] 'Oh the kingly and exalted sage[1]! I have described to you the importance and significance of devotional singing of the divine glories of the Lord. Oh the senior Brahmin[2]! A Brahmin (i.e., a noble, virtuous, righteous, devout, learned and pious person)[3] who sings the glories and virtues of Vasudeo[4] night and day[5] (63), attains emancipation and salvation known as Sayujya, i.e., he becomes one with Lord Hari and attains his abode near him[6]. This achievement is equivalent in its honour and reward as that obtained by doing all the prescribed fire sacrifices and religious rituals[7]. One goes to hell[8] if one sings the glories of anyone else except the supreme Lord[9] (64). [63-64]

[1]मुनिशार्दूल, [2]द्विज, [3]ब्राह्मणो, [4]वासुदेवाख्यं गायमानो, [5]ऽनिशं, [6]हरेः सायुज्यमाप्नोति, [7]सर्वयज्ञफलं लभेत्, [8]अत्यथा नरकं गच्छेद्, [9]गायमानोऽन्यदेव हि

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा वासुदेवपरायणः ।
गायञ्छ्रृण्वंस्तमाप्नोति तस्माच्छ्रेष्ठः प्रियंवदः ।।६५।।

A person who sings the glories and virtues of Vasudeo (Vishnu) with dedication and devotion[1] employing his actions and deeds, his mind and heart as well as his speech[2], is able to attain many exalted statures of great honour and respect[3] (as a blessing and reward for such devotional singing). That is the reason why he (Narad) is dear to all the creatures (whether mortal human beings or immortal Gods)[4] and is considered as the most exalted, senior most, honorable and venerable amongst the sages[5] (65).

[1]वासुदेवपरायणः, [2]कर्मणा मनसा वाचा, [3]स्तमाप्नोति, [4]प्रियंवदः, [5]च्छ्रेष्ठः

[Note :- The two conditions prescribed here are— (i) sincere devotion and dedication (ii) employing deeds and action, mind and heart as well as speech in singing the glories of the Lord. When one is sincerely devoted to the Lord God, naturally then all his activities would be dedicated to the Lord; he would not do anything that would not be liked by his Lord; he will not think of anything which is 'ungodly' or unrighteous and un-virtuous. His heart will be full of compassion and mercy, and he will speak only good and auspicious things because his mind and heart which govern his speech, thoughts, deeds and actions are the seats where the supreme Lord resides. Such a man would be automatically pious and holy, and his holiness will drip from his speech and voice like nectar drops from a flower; his actions will act as a soothing balm for the wounds inflicted upon a creature by this world. Obviously, he will be 'dear and beloved and endeared' to all, and naturally therefore, he will be the 'best of the pack', as it were.]

कथितमिदमपूर्व जानकीजन्मपूर्व
श्रुति–सुखमतिगुह्यं स्नेहतस्तेऽतिवाह्यम् ।
कलषु कुलविपक्षं भव्यदानैकदक्षं
नृभिर विरतवन्द्यं सर्वदेवाभिनन्द्यम् ।।६६।।

I have described to you the background of Sita's birth[1] which is very fascinating, amazing and mysterious[2] as well as most enchanting and captivating to hear[3]. I have described it to you out of affection for you. It has the potential to destroy all sins[4], singularly capable of providing welfare and auspiciousness[5], bestow comfort, happiness

and fearlessness to the renunciate who prays and adores this divine and glorious story (relating to Sri Ram and Sita)[6]. It also provides happiness and joy to the Gods[7] (66).

[1]जानकीजनमपूर्व, [2]अतिगुह्यं, [3]श्रुति–सुख, [4]कलषु कुलविपक्षं, [5]भव्यदानैकदक्षं, [6]नृभिर विरतवन्द्यं, [7]सर्वदेवाभिनन्द्यम्

Thus ends Canto 7 of the ancient epic Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing how Narad became an expert singer of devotional songs.

——*—*

Canto 8
Ravana getting boons and his becoming reckless; the birth of Sita

Ravana, the great 10-headed demon king, did severe penance to please the creator, Brahma. When asked for a boon, he first requested eternal life at which the creator expressed his inability to give it to him because everything that has come into existence will end one day (verse no. 8-9). As an alternative, Ravana demanded that he be granted immunity from being harmed by the Gods and a slew of other demi-Gods, but in his overconfidence he did not seek immunity from earthlings (e.g., men, animals, sages etc.), because he thought that once the Gods were under his command, the earthlings are of no consequence. The most absurd and incredulous boon that he demanded was that he should die when he asks for 'sexual favour from his own daughter'! Armed with these boons, empowered and emboldened with having immunity from punishment by Gods, he went berserk and became ballistic, sledge hammering his way over the heavens, usurping the powers of the Gods, imprisoning them and their womenfolk. He became greedy, pervert, reckless, lustful, promiscuous and lascivious. Meanwhile, one day he went to the forest where great sages and hermits lived; they glowed with a divine and holy halo effusing and radiating form their bodies. Ravana thought that if he could conquer them, then no one on earth would dare raise his

head against him. Since killing them would give him a bad name, so he decided to extract their blood, or make them virtually 'bleed or shed blood under coercion' by piercing their bodies with his arrow. The piercing of them and shedding their blood would be symbolically equivalent to killing them.

He collected their blood in a pitcher. But, as it happened, one of the sages had prayed to Goddess Laxmi and wished to have her as his daughter. He sanctified some milk with her Mantras, kept it in a pitcher and went out to the forest to take a bath. Unfortunately for Ravana, this was the pitcher he used to collect blood from the sages and hermits. He brought the blood and kept it in the safe custody of his wife Mandodari, warning her that the fluid was 'more dangerous and more poisonous than the sharpest and most vicious of poisons' (verse no. 23). So, when Mandodari saw her husband's recklessness and sexual perversion, she decided to kill herself by drinking that 'formidable poisonous liquid'. But as destiny would have it, the 'empowered milk' that was kept by the sage in the pitcher was dissolved in the blood put into it by Ravana, and this milk not only neutralized its harmful effects but turned it into an ambrosia of fertility. Mandodari thus conceived. Stunned, shocked and awestruck, and fearing reprisals from her husband, she went to Kurushetra to abort the embryo and buried it in the ground.

Meanwhile, king Janak of Janakpur decided to perform a religious sacrifice at the pilgrim site of Kurushetra, and incidentally he selected the same field where Mandodari had buried that embryo. Janak was completely oblivious of what lay buried in the ground. When he ploughed the field to prepare it for the rituals, out came Sita. He took her in as his daughter, and raised her in his household.

यथा सा शोणितोद्भूता राक्षसीगर्भ सम्भवा ।
यथा भूमितलोत्पन्ना जानकी च यथा हि सा ।।१।।

Sage Valmiki continued to describe the story of how Sita was born. He said to Bharadwaj, 'Listen now to the story how Laxmi (the divine consort of Vishnu) manifested herself as Sita from the blood (collected by Ravana from the sages) and she took birth from the womb of a demoness (Mandodari) (1).

[Note :- This was due to Narad's curse as described in Canto 6, verse nos. 15-17.]

सीता तच्छृणु विप्रेन्द्र वर्णयामि तवानघ ।
दशास्यो रावणो नाम तपस्तप्तुं मनो दधे ।।२।।
त्रैलोक्यस्याधिपत्याय अजरामरणाय च ।
बहुवर्षं तपस्तप्त्वा ज्वलनार्कसमोऽज्वलत् ।।३।।

Oh Viprendra (literally, the king amongst Brahmins; hear referring to sage Bharadwaj)! I shall describe the fascinating story to you. The 10-headed Ravana decided to do severe Tapa (austerity, penance and keeping stern religious vows) (2) so that he could become immortal and free from disease and declining of the body due to old age[1] as well as to obtain unchallenged Lordship over all the 3 worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial and the nether worlds)[2]. He did it for several years, and consequentially, became radiant and glowing with the intensity of a burning fire[3]. [That is, after doing severe Tapa, his body glowed with divine radiance, and he acquired the halo which is reserved for those who do severe Tapa, such as sages and ascetics.] (3) [2-3]

[1]अजरामरणाय च, [2]त्रैलोक्यस्याधिपत्याय, [3]ज्वलनार्कसमोऽज्वलत्

तत्तेजसा जगत्सर्व दह्यमानं यदाभवत् ।
तमुवाच तदा ब्रह्मा समागत्य सुरैर्वृतः ।।४।।

When the whole world began to get scorched[1] due to the intense heat emanating from his glowing body due to the energy and powers acquired by doing severe Tapa[2], Brahma, the creator, came to him along with other Gods and said— (4).

[1]जगत्सर्व दह्यमानं, [2]तत्तेजसा,

पौलस्त्य विरमाद्य त्वं तपसो मम वाक्यतः ।
तपसोग्रेण महता लोका भस्मीकृता इव ।।५।।
वरं ददामि ते वत्स यत्ते मनसि वर्तते ।
तपोधनं लभस्वाद्य वरदान्मत्त ईप्सितम् ।।६।।

'Oh Paulastya (i.e., Ravana)! You should wind up your Tapa on my advice. All the worlds are about to get reduced to ashes due to the intense heat generated by your severe Tapa (5). Oh son! Whatever you desire in your heart, I shall give it to you. Oh Tapodhan (literally,

a treasury of Tapa, or one who has done great Tapa)! You shall get whatever you desire from me' (6). [5-6]

[Note :- Ravana was the son of Pulastya. That is why he is also known as Paulastya.]

न्यवारयत चक्षूंषि सूर्यबिम्बावलोकनात् ।
प्रणिपत्यजगन्नाथं वरं वव्रे स रावणः ।।७।।

Now you must close your eyes which appear to radiate the heat and dazzle as if they were an image of the splendorous sun in the sky; or your eyes seem to reflect the concentrated rays of the sun on to the world[1]'. Then Ravana prostrated[2] before the Lord of the world (Brahma)[3] and asked for boons[4] (7).

[1]सूर्यबिम्बावलोकनात्, [2]प्रणिपत्य, [3]जगन्नाथं, [4]वरं वव्रे

देहि सर्वामरत्वं मे वरदोऽसि यदि प्रभुः ।
तदाकर्ण्य वचो ब्रह्मा पुनः प्राह स रावणम् ।।८।।

'Oh Lord! If you indeed wish to bless me with a boon, then give me eternal immortality (or perpetual life which does not decay or end)[1]'. Hearing it, Brahma said to Ravana once again— (8).

[1]सर्वामरत्वं मे

नहि सर्वामरत्व ते वरमन्यं वृणीष्व मे ।
ततः स रावणः प्राह कूटी वादी हि राक्षसः ।।९।।

'No one can become completely immortal and truthfully eternal[1]. Ask for some other blessing or boon'. Then that clever, cunning and shrewd[2] demon Ravana quipped— (9).

[1]नहि सर्वामरत्व, [2]कूटी वादी

[Note :- Brahma refused to give this boon to Ravana because Brahma himself will come to an end one day when his life span ends. No one in this creation is truthfully eternal, except Brahm. Therefore, Brahma did not have the right to give something to Ravana which he himself did not possess.]

न सुरः नासुरण यक्षाः पिशाचोरगराक्षसाः ।
विद्याधराः किन्नरा वा तथैवाप्सरसां गणाः ।।१०।।
न हन्युर्मां कथं चित्त देहि मे वरमुत्तमम् ।
अन्यच्च ते वृणे ब्रह्मस्तच्छृणुष्व पितामह ।।११।।
आत्मनो दुहिता मोहदात्यर्थं प्रार्थिता भवेत् ।
तदा मृत्युर्मम भवेद्यदि कन्या न कांक्षति ।।१२।।

'Gods, non-Gods, Yakshas (a demi-God who guards the treasure of Kuber, the treasurer of Gods; he is an employee of Kuber), phantoms and ogres, spirits, demons, Vidyadhars (a demi-God who is wiser than other demi-Gods), Kinnars (celestial male dancers) or the guards who protect celestial Apsaras (the courtesans of Indra's court; they are celestial damsels)[1] (10)—bless me with this excellent boon that none of them can ever kill or harm me[2]. Oh grandfather Brahmaa[3]! Listen to the other boon that I ask for (11). When, under the influence of delusion and ignorance as well as passion and lust (collectively called Moha)[4], I request my own daughter[5] and she turns down my request[6], it should be then that I would die[7]' (12). [10-12]

[1]देहि मे वरमुत्तमम्, [2]न हन्युर्मां कथं, [3]ब्रह्म पितामह, [4]मोहदात्यर्थ, [5]आत्मनो दुहिता प्रार्थिता भवेत्, [6]कन्या न कांक्षति, [7]तदा मृत्युर्मम भवेद्यदि

तथेत्युक्त्वा जगामाशु ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः ।
नरान्नाजीगणद्रक्षा मत्वा तान्स्तृणवद्द्विज ।।१३।।

Saying, 'Well, alright, so be it', the grandfather patriarch of the world, Brahma went away from there. Oh Brahmin (Bharadwaj). Ravana was so overconfident of himself and regarded humans as mere twigs of no consequence[1] that he treated them with utter disdain and contempt and he did not bother to ask for immunity from getting killed by humans[2] (13).

[1]तान्स्तृणवद्, [2]नरान्नाजीगणद्रक्षा मत्वा

ब्रह्मदत्तवरो राजा रावणो वरदर्पितः ।
त्रैलोक्यजयसर्वस्वं प्राप्तवान्बाहुवीर्यतः ।।१४।।

Emboldened by Brahmaa's boon (that no one can kill him now), king Ravana became belligerent, ballistic, merciless, pervert, unrelenting and reckless. He impassively went berserk and aggressively conquered the entire Triloki (consisting of the 3 worlds— the nether, the terrestrial and the heavens) with impunity (14).

एकदा रावणो राजा दण्डकारण्यमागतः ।
तदर्षींनग्निकल्पांश्च दृष्ट्वा मनस्यचिन्तयत् ।।१५।।
एतान जित्वा हि कथं त्रिलोकीजयभागहम् ।
एषां वधेन च श्रेयो न पश्यामि महात्मानाम् ।।१६।।

Once, king Ravana came to a forest known as Dandakaranya[1]. When he saw the great sages there who effused a divine radiance which resembled the brilliant light and splendour emanating from a burning fire[2], he thought to himself (15), 'How can I be truthfully called a conqueror and vanquisher of Triloki[3] without vanquishing and subduing these people? At the same time, I do not see any merit or benefit or credit in killing these great souls[4] (who have not harmed me)' (16). [15-16]

[1]दण्डकारण्यमागतः, [2]तदर्षींनग्निकल्पांश्च, [3]त्रिलोकीजयभागहम्, [4]महात्मानाम्

दुरात्मा स विचिन्त्यैतत्प्राह तान्मुनिपुङ्गवान् ।
अहं सर्वस्य जगतः शास्ता च जयभागहम् ।।१७।।
भवतां जयमाकांक्षे जयं दत्त द्विजर्षभाः ।
इत्युक्त्वा स शराग्रेण क्षताच्छोणितमङ्गतः ।।१८।।
बलादाकृष्य तेषां वै कलशेस्थापयत्प्रभुः।।१८½।

Thinking thus, that wicked and pervert fellow[1] said to those exalted sages[2], 'I have the honour of conquering the entire world[3] (17). Oh exalted Brahmins[4]! I now desire to subdue and conquer you[5]. Give me this privilege[6]'. Saying this, he forcefully pierced their bodies with the tip of his arrow[7] and collected their blood in a pitcher[8] (18½). [17-18½]

[1]दुरात्मा, [2]तान्मुनिपुङ्गवान्, [3]सर्वस्य जगतः शास्ता च जयभागहम्, [4]द्विजर्षभाः, [5]जयमाकांक्षे, [6]जयं दत्त, [7]शराग्रेण क्षताच्छोणितमङ्गतः, [8]बलादाकृष्य तेषां वै कलशेस्थापयत्प्रभुः

तत्र गृत्समदो नाम शतपुत्रपिता द्विजः ।।१९।।
दुहित्रर्थे भार्यया स प्रार्थितो भगवान्मुनिः ।
लक्ष्मीर्मे दुहिता भूयादित्यसौ कलशे विभुः ।।२०।।
दुग्धं चाहरहस्तत्र कुशाग्रेण समन्त्रतः ।
स्थपयत्येष नियतस्तदहर्निर्ययौ वनम् ।।२१।।

Among those sages was a Brahmin named Gritsamad[1] who was the father of a hundred sons[2] (19). That Brahmin, along with his wife, had wished to have a daughter, and therefore requested the Lord for a girl child[3]. He had asked that Laxmi should become their child[4] (20). With this prayer, he had sanctified a little milk[5] with the tip of Kush grass[6] (a special blade of dark green grass or reed used to invoke divine Mantras and Gods to sanctify anything; the grass is called *Agrostis-linearis*) and kept it in a pitcher before going out to the forest (21). [19-21]

[1]गृत्समदो द्विजः, [2]शतपुत्रपिता, [3]दुहित्रर्थे प्रार्थितो, [4]लक्ष्मीर्मे दुहिता, [5]दुग्धं समन्त्रतः, [6]कुशाग्रेण

तद्दिने दैवयोगेन कलशे तत्र रावणः ।
मुनीनां शोणितं स्थाप्य गृहीत्वा स्वगृहं ययौ ।।२२।।

As destiny would have it, or as it was predetermined by the Gods[1], that day Ravana used that pitcher to collect the blood that he had extracted forcibly from the sages[2], and then he went home with that pitcher full of the blood of the sages (22).

[1]दैवयोगेन, [2]मुनीनां शोणितं

भार्या मन्दोदरीं प्राह कलशं रक्ष सुन्दरि ।
विषादप्यधिकं विद्धि शोणितं कलशे स्थितम् ।।२३।।
न देयं नापि वा भक्ष्यं मुनीनां शोणितं त्विदम् ।२३½।

He said to his wife Mandodari, 'Oh the beautiful one! Take care of this pitcher. The blood that is stored in it is more potent, more powerful, more sharp and scorching, more corroding and caustic than the most powerful poison in existence[1] (23). This blood belonging to the sages should neither be given to anyone[2] nor should it be imbibed or injected in any way[3]' (23½). [23-23½]

[1]विषादप्यधिकं विद्धि शोणितं, [2]न देयं नापि, [3]वा भक्ष्यं

त्रैलोक्यजयलाभेन रावणो लोकरावणः ।।२४।।
देवदानवयक्षाणां गन्धर्वाणां च कन्यकाः ।
आहृत्य रमयामास मन्दरे सह्यपर्वते ।।२५।।
हिमवन्मेरुविन्ध्याद्रौ रमणीयवने तथा ।२५½।

As the spoils of conquest of the entire Triloki (see verse no. 16)[1], Ravana, who made the whole world weep and wail under his tyranny[2] (24), captured and abducted[3] the womenfolk and virgins[4] of the Gods, other demons (called Danavs), Yakshas and Gandharvas. He indulged in satisfying his carnal desires, lust and promiscuity[5] by incarcerating them (or holding them in captivity) on the mountains called Mandar and Sahaya[6] (25). He also roamed about and frolicked with them in the enchanting and pleasing environs of the forest[7] of the Himalayas, Mt. Meru and Mt. Vindhyachal[8] (25½). [24-25½]

[1]त्रैलोक्यजयलाभेन, [2]लोकरावणः, [3]आहृत्य, [3]कन्यकाः, [5]रमयामास, [6]मन्दरे सह्यपर्वते, [7]रमणीयवने, [8]हिमवन्मेरुविन्ध्याद्रौ

मन्दोदरी तथा दृष्ट्वा पति सा हि मनस्विनी ।।२६।।
आत्मानं गर्हयामास भर्तुः स्नेहमपश्यती ।
धिग्जीवितं हि नारीणां यौवनं कुलमेव च ।।२७।।
वञ्चिताः पतिना याः स्युस्तस्मान्मे मरणं वरम् ।२७½।

A thoughtful Mandodari became melancholic and remorseful. She was aghast at her husband's promiscuity and recklessness[1] (26). When she observed her husband's lascivious and pervert nature, seeing that her husband is enamoured of other women and showers his love and affection on them[2] instead of his own wife, she cursed and spited at herself that it is shameful and abominable[3] for a woman of her age and clan and reputation[4] to bear with such ignominy, humiliation, embarrassment and insult (27) that she is deprived of the attention and affection of her husband[5] who is showing it to other women. It is better for her to die and end her life[6] than to cope with this abhorable and contemptible existence, she thought to herself (27½). [26-27½]

[1]मन्दोदरी मनस्विनी, [2]स्नेहमपश्यती, [3]धिग्जीवितं, [4]यौवनं कुलमेव, [5]वञ्चिताः पतिना, [6]मरणं वरम्

पुरा रावणसन्दिष्टं शोणितं क्ष्वेडतोऽधिकम् ।।२८।।
पपौ मरणमांकांक्ष्य पतिना वञ्चिता सती ।
लक्ष्मीशरणदुग्धेन मिश्रिताच्छोणिताद्भुत् ।।२९।।

Ravana had said earlier that this blood (collected from the sages) is more dangerous and killing than the strongest of poison (28). That loyal and chaste woman[1] (Mandodari), who was betrayed and abandoned by her husband[2] (Ravana) and who felt distraught and dejected at being neglected and rejected by her own husband, drank that blood in order to kill herself (i.e., commit suicide)[3]. That blood had the sanctified and wonderfully empowered milk[4] which was specially invoked with divine Mantras through which Laxmi was to take birth on this earth[5]. (See verse nos. 15-17 and 23-24½ of Canto no. 6) (29). [28-29]

[1]सती, [2]पतिना वञ्चिता, [3]मरणमांकांक्ष्य, [4]मिश्रिताच्छोणिताद्भुत्, [5]लक्ष्मीशरणदुग्धेन

सद्यो रावणाकान्ताया गर्भो ज्वलनसन्निभः ।
ततो विस्मयमापन्ना सा हि मन्दोदरी शुभाः ।।३०।।

As soon as she drank that blood, a glorious and splendours

conception resembling the radiance of fire took place in her womb[1]. Observing this strange and mysterious phenomenon, Mandodari, the chaste woman[2], was utterly astonished and dumbfounded[3] (30).

[1]गर्भो ज्वलनसन्निभ:, [2]मन्दोदरी शुभा:, [3]विस्मयमापन्ना,

पीतं विषाधिकं रक्तं गर्भस्तेनाभवन्मम् ।
इति सञ्चिन्तयामास भर्ता विप्रेषितौ मम ।।३१।।
कामिनीभि: क्रीडतं स कामी भर्ता हि रावण: ।
सम्वत्सरमिमं भर्त्रा सह मे वसतिर्नहि ।।३२।।

She wondered, 'I had drunk blood that was more powerful than the strongest of poisons in order to commit suicide. I wonder how I've conceived[1]. My husband is not near me at the present time'. She was confounded and perplexed at this strange and most unexpected development, and became very worried and regretful[2] (31).

'My husband is passionately playing around with beautiful and sexually aroused women[3]. For the last one year[4], I have had no physical relationship with him[5] (32). [31-32]

[1]गर्भस्तेनाभवन्मम्, [2]सञ्चिन्तयामास, [3]कामिनीभि: क्रीडतं, [4]सम्वत्सरमिमं, [5]भर्त्रा सह मे वसतिर्नहि,

कि वक्तव्यं मया साध्व्या गर्भिण्या भर्तृ संसदि ।
चिन्तया दग्धगात्रीव तीर्थसेवन छद्मना ।।३३।।
विमानवरमारुह्य कुरुक्षेत्रं जगाम सा ।
तत्र गर्भ विनिष्कृष्य निचखान भुवस्तले ।।३४।।

What will I say; how will I justify my pregnancy[1] to my husband who regards me as chaste, loyal, honourable, immaculate and pure[2]?' Fearful of the horrible scandal, ignominy and numerous other unwanted consequences attendant to this development, she thought of an escape route. She pretended that she should go on a pilgrimage in disguise[3] (33) and boarded a plane to go to Kurushetra. There she aborted the embryo[4] and buried it in the ground[5] (34). [33-34]

[1]गर्भिण्या, [2]मया साध्व्या, [3]तीर्थसेवन छद्मना, [4]गर्भ विनिष्कृष्य, [5]निचखान भुवस्तले

स्नात्वा सरस्वतीतोये पुरायात्स्वमालयम् ।
च चोदितं तत्कस्मैजिद्रह: कार्य सुगोपितम् ।।३५।।

She bathed in the river Saraswati and went back home. This action she kept absolutely secret with her (35).

कालेन कियता ब्रह्मज्ञनकर्षिर्महामना: ।
कुरुक्षेत्रं समसाद्य जाङ्गले यज्ञमावहन् ।।३६।।

[Sage Valmiki said to Bharadwaj—] 'Oh Brahmin! After sometime, the great and wise king Janak came to the forests of Kurushetra[1] and did a fire sacrifice there[2] (36).

[1]कुरुक्षेत्रं जाङ्गले, [2]यज्ञमावहन्

स्वर्णलाङ्गलमादाय यज्ञभूमि चखान स: ।
स्वर्णलाङ्गलसीतान्त: कन्यैका प्रोत्थिताभवत् ।।३७।।
पुष्पवृष्ठिश्च महती पपात कन्यकोपरि ।
तद्दृष्ट्वा महदाश्चर्य राजा विस्मयमागत: ।।३८।।

He took a golden plough[1] and ploughed the ground where the fire sacrifice was to be performed[2] (as a ritual to prepare it for the sacrifice) (37). From the ground that was scooped up by the golden ploughshare, an infant girl child emerged[3]. There was a tremendous hail of flowers from the heavens[4] on that girl child. Observing this most strange, miraculous and fascinating sight[5], the king was amazed and wonderstruck[6] (38). [37-38]

[1]स्वर्णलाङ्गलमादाय, [2]यज्ञभूमि चखान स:, [3]सीतान्त: कन्यैका प्रोत्थिताभवत्, [4]पुष्पवृष्ठिश्च महती, [5]दृष्ट्वा महदाश्चर्य, [6]राजा विस्मयमागत:,

कर्तव्ये मुढतामाप तत: खेऽभूत्सरस्वती ।
राजन्गृहाण कन्यां त्वं पालयैनां महाप्रभाम् ।।३९।।
ज्वलनार्कसमां दिव्यां महत्कार्यं तवालये ।
भविष्यति महाभाग क्षेमं च जगतोऽनया ।।४०।।

He was stunned and dumbfounded into stupor, not knowing what to do[1]. At that moment, there was an invisible voice from the sky that addressed the king[2]. It said, 'Oh King! Accept this most glorious girl child who is radiant and splendorous like the electric[3], and bring her up (i.e., take care of her like she were your own daughter)[4] (39). This daughter, who is divine and glorious like a fire[5], will be very fortunate for your household. Something great will be done by her presence in your place[6]. Oh the most fortunate king[7]! She will play a key role in doing something which would be good for the whole world (or, she will be instrumental in ensuring welfare for the entire world)[8] (40). [39-40]

[1]कर्तव्ये मुढतामाप, [2]खेऽभूत्सरस्वती, [3]महाप्रभाम्, [4]कन्यां त्वं पालयैनां, [5]ज्वलनार्कसमां

दिव्यां, [6]महत्कार्यं तवालये, [7]महाभाग, [9]क्षेमं च जगतोऽनया

यज्ञः सम्पाद्यतां राजन्नायं विघ्नस्तवानघ ।
नामास्याः किल सीतेति सीताया उत्थिता यतः ।।४१।।
कल्पयैना दुहितरमित्युक्त्वावाक् तिरोहिता ।४१½।

Oh king! This happening is not some kind of bad omen as you are afraid of[1]. Go ahead and complete your sacrifice[2]. Since she has emerged from a furrow made by a ploughshare[3], she will be known as 'Sita'[4] (41). Regard her as your own daughter[5].' After this, the impersonal, invisible voice went silent (41½). [41-41½]

[1]न्नायं विघ्नस्त, [2]यज्ञः सम्पाद्यतां, [3]सीताया उत्थिता, [4]नामास्याः किल सीतेति, [5]कल्पयैना दुहिता

तच्छ्रुत्वा प्रीतिमान्राजा यज्ञं कृत्वा महाधनम् ।।४२।।
जगाम सीतामादाय महर्षिभ्यश्च तां ददौ।४२½।

Hearing this divine instruction from the heavens, the king was exhilarated. He cheerfully completed the rituals involving huge expenditure[1] (42), and after its successful completion, he brought Sita and handed her over reverentially to the great sages and seers for their blessings[2] (42½). [42-42½]

[1]यज्ञं कृत्वा महाधनम्, [2]सीतामादाय महर्षिभ्यश्च तां ददौ

एतत्ते कथितं विप्र सीताजन्मैककारणम् ।
श्रुत्वैतत्सर्वपापेभ्यो मुक्तो भवति मानवः ।।४३।।

[Valmiki said to Bharadwaj—] 'Oh Brahmin! I've told you the story of how Sita was born. A person can become absolved of all sins and misdeeds that he has done if he hears this episode with reverence and devotion (43).

जनकदुहितृजन्म श्रावयित्वा तु श्रुत्वा
न पुनरिह जन्म प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यवांश्च ।
दशरथसुतकान्ता तस्य गेहं कदाचिताद्विसृजति
नहि सर्वैः पातकैर्मुच्यते च ।।४४।।

By telling this story about the birth of the daughter of Janak[1] as well as by hearing about it, one does not have to take birth in this world again[2]. Such a person is blessed with virtues and goodnesses. The divine consort of the son of Dasrath[4] (i.e., Laxmi as Sita who was married to Sri Ram, who was Vishnu manifested as the son of

Dasrath) never abandons his household[5]. [That is, Sri Ram and Sita always live in the house of a person who hears their divine story called Ramayan with due honour and respect.] Besides this, such a person is liberated from the ill effect of all sins and misdeeds done by him[6] (44)'.

[1]जनकदुहितृजन्म, [2]न पुनरिह जन्म, [3]प्राप्नुयात्पुण्यवांश्च, [4]दशरथसुतकान्ता, [5]तस्य गेहं कदाचिताद्विसृजति, [6]नहि सर्वैः पातकैर्मुच्यते च

Thus ends Canto 8 of the ancient epic Adbhut Ramayan written by Valmiki describing the birth of Sita.

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Canto 9
Sage Parashuram sees the divine, macrocosmic, Viraat form of Sri Ram as Vishnu

After having married Sita, Sri Ram's marriage party on was on its way back to Ayodhya when an angry sage Parashuram came for a face off because he had heard about Sri Ram breaking Lord Shiva's bow, called Pinak, because the breaking or stringing of which was a preset condition for anyone marrying Sita. He also wished to see Sri Ram and verify his credentials as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Peeved at the sage's impertinence and arrogance, Sri Ram snatched his bow and arrow, mounted it and shot the arrow at him. Almost simultaneously, Sri Ram revealed his true divine form of the macrocosmic, vast and colossus all-encompassing form as Lord Vishnu, also known as Viraat Purush, in whose body the whole creation was visible to the sage. Meanwhile, the arrow sapped the energy and divine powers possessed by the sage, leaving him limp like a withered plant. Terrified, dazed, numbed and crestfallen beyond measure, the sage fainted. Upon recovery, Sri Ram advised him to go to do Tapa (austerity, penance and keeping stern religious vows) all over again. At the end of one year of severe penances, the spirits of the sage's dead ancestors, called Pittars, advised him to go and bathe in the holy site of a river called Vadhusar to regain his lost glory, which Parashuram did. As a result, he

got back his powers and potentials. Meanwhile, Sri Ram's entourage came back to Ayodhya.

रामः सीतापरिणयं कृत्वा दशरथादिभिः ।
भ्रातृभिश्चापि सहितो भार्यया सह सीतया ।।१।।
अयोध्यां गन्तुमारेभे नानावाद्यपुरःसरम् ।१½।

After marrying Sita in the presence of king Dasrath (his father) and others, Sri Ram started making preparations to return back to Ayodhya along with his brothers and his newly wed wife Sita (1-1½).

आर्चीकनन्दनो रामो भार्गवो रेणुकासुतः ।।२।।
तस्य दाशरथेः श्रुत्वा रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः ।
विवाहकौतुकं वीरः पथा तेन समागतम् ।।३।।

Sage Parashuram[1], who was born in the clan/family of sages Brihgu and Richik[2] and whose mother was called Renuka[3] (2), heard about the marvelous, amazing, most difficult and stupendous deeds done[4] by Sri Ram, the son of Dasrath[5]. Amazed and mystified at those deeds done by Sri Ram leading to his marriage (with Sita)[6], Parashuram became eager to see and meet him in person. So he came and met Sri Ram while he was on the way[7] back to Ayodhya after marriage (3). [2-3]

[1]रामो, [2]आर्चीकनन्दनो भार्गवो, [3]रेणुकासुतः, [4]अक्लिष्टकर्मणः, [5]दाशरथेः राम, [6]विवाहकौतुकं वीरः, [7]पथा तेन समागतम्

[Note :- The great and marvelously amazing deeds done by Sri Ram leading to his marriage with Sita was the lifting and breaking of the stern bow, called Pinak, belonging to Lord Shiva. Sita's father Janak had made a vow that anyone who could string that bow would betrothal Sita. All great kings on the earth had assembled to try their luck, but failed. Sri Ram had raised and, trying to string the sturdy but old bow, had broken it as if it was a sport. Though not expressly mentioned in the text, this news angered Parashuram because he took it as an affront and an assiduous insult of Lord Shiva, his patron God. He came to take revenge and punish Sri Ram for his temerity, but at the same time he was curious to see that person who could do such an impossible task.]

धनुरादाय तद्दिव्यं क्षत्रियाणां निबर्हणम् ।
जिज्ञास्यमानो रामस्य वीर्यं दाशरथेस्तथा ।।४।।

He (Parashuram) was a vanquisher of the Kshatriyas (the warrior class)[1]. He took a magnificent and divine bow in his hand[2] and came to meet Sri Ram, the son of Dasrath, to judge and measure his valour, strength and potentials[3] (4).

[1]क्षत्रियाणां निबर्हणम्, [2]धनुरादाय तद्दिव्यं, [3]जिज्ञास्यमानो वीर्य

स तमभ्यागतं दृष्ट्वा उद्यतास्त्रमवस्थितम् ।
प्रहसन्निव विप्रेन्द्रं रामो वचनमब्रवीत् ।।५।।
स्वागतं ते मुनिश्रेष्ठ किं कार्यं करवाणि ते ।½।

Seeing the sage standing in front with weapons at the ready in a confrontationist attitude, Sri Ram smiled and said to that Viprendra (literally meaning one who is like a king amongst Brahmins) (5), 'Oh exalted sage! I welcome you; what can I do for you?' (5½). [5-5½]

प्रोवाच भार्गवो वाक्यं स्वागतेन किमस्ति मे ।।६।।
क्षत्रकालं हि राजेन्द्र धनुरेतन्ममास्ति हि ।
समारोपय यत्नेन यदि शक्तोसि राघव ।।७।।

At this, Bhargava (i.e., Parashuram) snubbed him, saying sternly, scornfully and tauntingly, 'What I have got to do with formal welcomes? (6). Oh Rajendra (literally meaning an emperor, or a King of kings)! I hold in my hands the bow which symbolises death for the entire Kshatriya race. If you have the potential, requisite strength and guts, then string it' (7). [6-7]

इत्युक्तस्त्वाह भगवन्स्त्वं नाधिक्षेप्तुमर्हसि ।
नहि नह्यधमो धर्मः क्षत्रियाणां द्विजातिषु ।।८।।
इक्ष्वाकूणां विशेषेण बाहुवीर्येण कत्थनम् ।८½।

When Parashuram said these challenging and arrogant words, Sri Ram quipped, 'Oh Lord! You must not make such wild allegations[1]. Among all the upper classes[2] (i.e., Brahmins, the priestly class, Kshatriyas, the warrior class and Vaishyas, the trading class), I have not fallen from my righteous path of following the tenets and rules of conduct prescribed for the Kshatriyas[3] (8). Especially the Kshatriyas born in the clan/family of king Ikshawku do not haughtily display and brag about their strength, powers, potentials and valour

in public[4] (8½)'. [8-8½]

[1]नाधिक्षेप्तुमर्हसि, [2]द्विजातिषु, [3]नहि नह्यधमो धर्मः क्षत्रियाणां, [4]बाहुवीर्येण कत्थनम्

तमेवं वादिनं तत्र रामो वचनब्रवीत ।।९।।
बलं वागुपदेशेन धनुरायच्छ राघव ।९½।

When Sri Ram politely said so, Parashuram snapped back at him, 'Oh Raghav! Don't preach me by your words[1]. Show your potent and strength and prowess[2] by stringing this bow[3]' (9-9½).

[1]वागुपदेशेन, [2]बलं, [3]धनुरायच्छ

ततो जग्राह रोषेण क्षत्रियर्षभसूदनम् ।।१०।।
रामो दाशरर्थिर्दिव्यं हस्तादामस्य कार्मुकम् ।
धनुरारोपयामास सलिलमिव राघवः ।।११।।

Then Sri Ram, the son of Dasrath, angrily snatched[1] that glorious and divine bow which had the reputation of being a vanquisher and a slayer of the Kshatriya race[2] from the hands of Parashuram and stringed it playfully[3] (i.e., effortlessly, as if it was a sport) (10-11).

[1]जग्राह रोषेण, [2]दिव्यं क्षत्रियर्षभसूदनम्, [4]धनुरारोपयामास सलिलमिव

ज्याशब्दमकरोत्तत्र स्मयमानः स वीर्यमान् ।
तस्य शब्देन भूतानि वित्रेसुरशनेरिव ।।१२।।

The most valiant and valourous Sri Ram laughed and pulled the string of that bow to make a fierce twang noise from it. That sound resembled the reverberating and rolling thunder created by a bolt of lightening in the sky, and it made all the creatures terrified and stunned (12).

अथाब्रवीद्वचो रामं रामोदशरथिस्तदा ।
इदमारोपितं ब्रह्मन्किमन्यत्करवाणि ते ।।१३।।

Then Sri Ram, the son of Dasrath, said sarcastically to Parashuram, 'Oh Brahmin! I have stringed the bow. Now, what is the other work of yours that I can do for you?' (13).

तस्य रामौ ददौ दिव्यं जामदग्न्यो महाबलः ।
शरमाकर्णदेशान्तमयमाकृष्यतामिति ।।१४।।

Then Jamdagni Nandan (i.e., the son of sage Jagdagni; here referring to sage Parashuram)[1] gave the most strong, valiant and powerful Sri Ram[2] a glorious, majestic and divine arrow[3] and instructed him, 'Mount this arrow on the bow and pull it (i.e., pull the string with

the arrow mounted on it) right up to your ears' (14).

[1]जामदग्न्यो, [2]रामौ महाबलः, [3]दिव्यं शर

एतच्छ्रुत्वाब्रवीद्रामः प्रदीप्त इव मन्युना ।
श्रूयते क्षम्यते चैव दर्पपूर्णोऽसि भार्गव ।।१५।।
त्वया ह्यधिगतं तेजः क्षत्रियेभ्यो विशेषतः ।
पितामहप्रसादेन तेन मां क्षिपसि ध्रुवम् ।।१६।।

As soon as Sri Ram heard it, he was outraged and flared up angrily like a kindled fire[1]. He severely snubbed him (Parashuram) and reproachfully snapped, 'Oh Bhargav! You are very haughty and arrogant[2]. I hear your stern words but forgive you[3] (15). Relying upon the potential powers, the protection and blessings of your glorious grandfather[4], you have got immunity from harm, and as a consequence of it you have conquered the Kshatriya race to acquire immense fame, glory, radiance and potentials[5]. And that is why, surely, you make wild allegations upon me and attempt to brow-beat me into submission[6] (16). [15-16]

[1]प्रदीप्त इव मन्युना, [2]दर्पपूर्णोऽसि भार्गव, [3]श्रूयते क्षम्यते चैव, [4]विशेषतः पितामहप्रसादेन, [5]क्षत्रियेभ्यो ह्यधिगतं, [6]मां क्षिपसि ध्रुवम्

पश्य मां स्वेन रूपेण चक्षुसते वितराम्यहम् ।
इत्युक्त्वा प्रददौ तस्मै रामो दिव्यां दृशं तदा ।।१७।।

Have a divine view of my macrocosmic form[1]. I give you insight and divine sight to enable you to do so[2]' Saying this, Sri Ram blessed him with a divine sight that could see beyond the mundane and visible world, a sight that transcended the normal view and could see the paranormal and subtle sights which was not possible by the physical gross eyes of the body[3] (17).

[1]पश्य मां स्वेन रूपेण, [2]चक्षुसते वितराम्यहम्, [3]दिव्यां दृशं

ततो रामशरीरे वै रामोऽपश्यत्स भार्गवः ।
आदित्यान्सवसून् रुद्रान्साध्यांश्च समरुद्गणान् ।।१८।।
पितृन्हुताशनांश्चैव नक्षत्राणि ग्रहांस्तथा ।
गन्धर्वान् राक्षसान्यक्षात्रदीस्तीर्थानि यानि वै ।।१९।।
ऋषीन्वै निखिलान्यांश्च ब्रह्मभूतान्सनातनान् ।
देवर्षींश्चैव कात्स्न्र्येन समुद्रान्पर्वतास्तथा ।।२०।।
वेदांश्च सोपनिषदान्वषट्कारान्सहाध्वरैः ।

ऋचो यजूंषि सामानि धनुर्वेदांश्च सर्वशः ।।२१।।

Sri Ram showed Bhargav (Parashuram) his vast, colossus, macrocosmic and all-encompassing form that included the whole cosmos in its ambit. The sage saw the following in a personified form on the outer surface, i.e., the skin of the body of that colossus form of the Lord (almost like so many spots or hairs or moles or other bodily features on a huge giant or a mammoth) —He saw Aditya (the various forms of the mythological suns)[1], the 8 Vasus[2], the 11 Rudras[3], the Gods who are worshipped, 49 Maruts[4] (the Wind-Gods) (18), the Pittars (spirits of dead ancestors), the Agni Dev (the Fire-God), the stars and planets, Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Yakshas (demi-Gods who guard the treasure of Gods), the different rivers and the pilgrim sites (19), the eternal basic elements of creation called the Brahm Bhuts[5], the great sages Balkhilya and Narad, all the oceans and seas, the mountains (20), all the Upanishads which are integral part and the end of the different Vedas, the fire sacrifices in which the sacrificial pit is designed like a hexagon, the principle Vedas such as the Rig, Yajur and Sam along with a sub Veda called Dhanur Veda (which deals with the skill and art of archery as well as the science of warfare). All these were visible on the body of the macrocosmic, colossus, vast and all-encompassing form of Sri Ram as the supreme divine Being that was revealed to Bhargav Parashuram[6] (21). [18-21]

[Note :- [1]The 12 Adityas are mythological Suns and appear as patron Gods who (i) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); are like the heads (Taiteriya Brahmin, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures. These 12 Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following— 8 Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = 12. According to Brihad Aranakya Upanishad 3/9/5, the 12 months of the year represent 12 Adityas, one month for one Aditya.

[2]The 8 Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is

not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun-God (who provides energy and food), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water-God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire-God (called Agni), (vii) the rays and radiance of the sun (i.e., sunlight and the energy that it provides), and (viii) the holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranakya Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following-. Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets)

[3]The 11 Rudras are the following— (i) Mannu (मन्यु), (ii) Manu (मनु), (iii) Mahinas (महिनस), (iv) Mahaan (महान), (v) Shiva (शिव), (vi) Ritdwaj (ऋत्ध्वज), (vii) Ugrareta (उग्ररेता), (viii) Bhav (भव), (ix) Kaal (काल), (x) Vamdeo (वामदेव), (xi) Dhritvrat (धृतव्रत). The 11 Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1 and Taiteriya Brahmin. 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind-God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1).

[4]The 49 Maruts —they are the Wind-Gods mentioned in Rig Veda, 1/37-39 and 1/165/3, 5, 7, 9. They are regarded variously as — (i) sons of Indra and Vrishni (Rig Veda, 2/34/2), (ii) Sons of Rudra (Rig Veda, 2/33/1), (iii) similar to the Fire-God (Rig Veda, 6/66/2), and (vi) Indra God (Rig Veda, 1/165, 171). The Purans call them sons of sage Kashyap and Diti.

[5]The Brahm Bhuts —these are the 5 basic elements first created by Brahm—viz., space, air, fire, water, earth.

[6]Sage Bhargav finds mention first in the Rig Veda as a great sage who was an expert in doing fire sacrifices using 'Som' or the nectar of bliss and happiness called ambrosia. That is why he is also known as 'Somahuti Bhargav', i.e., one who makes an offering of Som to the fire sacrifice as an oblation to the Gods (Rig Veda, 2/4/7). He is referred to in Yajur Veda, 11/70 and 12/43, and Sam Veda 94. Since this sage was born in the linage of sage Bhrigu, he is also known as Bhargav. Sage Parashuram was born to mother Renuka

and father Jamdagni (verse no. 2, 14 of this Canto respectively.]

विद्युतो मेघवृन्दानि वर्षाणि च महाव्रत।
ततः स भगवान्विष्णुस्तं वै बाणं मुमोच ह ।।२२।।
शुष्काशनि समाकीर्णं महोल्काभिश्च सुव्रतः ।
पासुवर्षेण महता मेघसंघैश्च केवलम् ।।२३।।

Oh the one who is steadfast in keeping stern religious vows[1]! Huge banks of dark clouds, rains and bolts of lightening[2] were also perceptible in Sri Ram's colossus form. Then Sri Ram, in his divine form as Lord Vishnu, shot that invincible arrow[3] (22). Oh the one who keeps righteous vows[4]!At that instant, the whole earth was enveloped in a tumultuous thunder created by bolts of lightening streaking across the sky in every direction even without a trace of cloud appearing anywhere, while spluttering, sizzling, hissing and scintillating meteors and meteorites appeared to shower on it from all the directions everywhere[5]. A fierce howling storm with dark foreboding clouds arose and dust rained in all the corners of the earth[6] (23). [22-23]

[1]महाव्रत, [2]विद्युतो मेघवृन्दानि वर्षाणि, [3]भगवान्विष्णुस्तं वै बाणं मुमोच, [4]सुव्रतः, [5]शुष्काशनि समाकीर्णं महोल्काभिश्च पासुवर्षेण, [6]महता मेघसंघैश्च केवलम्

[Note :- This is a horrible and most terrifying scenario resembling the events of the dooms day. Sri Ram's anger and the powerful arrow unleashed such great energy as if a huge atomic bomb had been detonated in the atmosphere, or a meteor had landed on the earth's surface after it was shot down from the outer space on being hit by Sri Ram's arrows.]

भूमिकम्पैः सनिर्घातैर्नादैश्च विपुलैरपि ।
भार्गवं विह्वलं कृत्वा तेजश्चाक्षिप्य केवलम् ।।२४।।
आगच्छज्ज्वलितो रामं बाणो बहुप्रचोदितः ।२४½।

The earth shook violently and repeatedly (i.e., there were repeated shocks of earth quakes)[1]. There were horrendous, terrifying, eerie sounds which reverberated and echoed everywhere; these sounds resembled the rumble and thunder of clouds during a severe thunderstorm, and other sounds which portended doom and destruction were also heard[2]. That arrow which was shot by Sri

Ram represented the strength of his invincible arms, and it glowed like a lancet of fiercely burning fire[3]. It made Bhargav (Parashuram) very much tormented, bewildered and extremely terrified and dazed. It neutralised his immense powers and potentials[4] (i.e., it virtually short-circuited his energy) and then came back to Sri Ram (even as a bolt of lightening pulls back into the clouds and disappears in it) (24½). [24-24½]

[1]भूमिकम्पैः, [2]सनिर्घातैर्नादैश्च विपुलैरपि, [3]आगच्छज्ज्वलितो रामं बाणो, [4]भार्गवं विह्वलं कृत्वा तेजश्चाक्षिप्य

[Note :- The 'voltage of energy' in Sri Ram's arrow was a thousand times more strong than what Parashuram possessed. Naturally, it 'short-circuited' his charges, blew his fuse of agility, vitality, thrust and punch of which he was so proud of, it melted his arrogance, haughtiness, ego and hypocrisy, leaving him crestfallen, flaccid and limp in his limbs, dazed, confused, perturbed, stunned, dumbfounded, listless and consternated so much so that he fainted, as is evident from the next verse.

After that, the bolt of electric reverted back to the point where there was a high voltage tower standing, as it were, and this tower represented Sri Ram to which this bolt of powerful electric discharge reverted. This analogy of the 'electric discharge and a high voltage neutralizing and blowing the fuse and melting the wire of a low voltage apparatus' is used by this author to explain in modern terms what actually might have happened at that time.]

स तु विह्वलतां गत्वा प्रतिलभ्य च चेतनाम् ।।२५।।
रामः प्रत्यागतप्राणः प्राणमद्विष्णुतेजसम् ।
विष्णुना सोऽभ्यनुज्ञातो महेन्द्रमगमत्पुनः ।।२६।।
भीतश्च तत्र न्यवसद्व्रीनीतश्च महातपाः ।२६½।

When he (Parashuram) regained his composure and consciousness, he felt as if he has got a new lease of life after death. He got up and reverentially bowed to Sri Ram who was radiantly glowing with the divine splendour so characteristic of Lord Vishnu. After that, he took permission from Vishnu who was in the form of Sri Ram and went back to Mt. Mahendra (to do Tapa). Ashamed and ashen

faced, contrite, dejected, consternated and regretful to the core, he started doing severe Tapa (i.e., severe austerity, penances and adhering to strict religious vows) once again to regain his lost glory, honour, strength and powers (25-26 ½).

ततः स्मवत्सरेऽतीते हृतौजसमवस्थितम् ।।२७।।
निर्मदं दुःखितं दृष्टवा पितरौ राममब्रुवन् ।२७½।

When one year had passed, the 'Pittars' (spirits of dead ancestors) saw Parashuram[1] in a dull hapless and helpless state[2]; he was crestfallen and very sad[3], and had no ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness left in him any more[4]. They advised him as follows— (27-27½).

[1]राममब्रुवन्, [2]हृतौजसमवस्थितम्, [3]दुःखितं, [4]निर्मदं

न वै सम्यगिदं पुत्र विष्णुमासाद्य वै कृतम् ।।२८।।
स हि पूज्यश्च मानयश्च त्रिषु लोकेषु सर्वदा ।२८½।

'Oh son! The way you had arrogantly misbehaved in front of Vishnu was not at all the proper way to act and was most disgraceful for you. He (Vishnu as Sri Ram) is most revered, worshipped, honoured and adored in all the 3 worlds (i.e., in the terrestrial, nether and the heavenly worlds) (28-28½).

गच्छ पुत्र नदीं पुण्यां वधूसरकृताह्वयाम् ।।२९।।
तत्रोपस्पृश्य तीर्थेषु पुनर्वपुरवाप्स्यसि ।२९½।

Now go to the banks of the holy river called Vadhusar. By bathing in the pilgrim and holy site located on its banks, you would get back your lost glory and potentials (29-29½).

दीप्तोदं नाम तत्तीर्थं यत्र ते प्रपितामहः ।।३०।।
भृगुर्देवयुगे राम तप्तवानुत्तमं तपः ।३०½।

There is a special place there called 'Diptodak'[1] (literally meaning a place which bestows glory, radiance, energy, splendour, majesty and powers). It is the place where your great grandfather (ancestor) named Bhrigu had done perfect and severe Tapa[2] in some previous time called 'Devyug'[3]' (30-30½).

[1]दीप्तोदं, [2]तप्तवानुत्तमं तपः, [3]देवयुगे

[Note :- Note no. 6 of verse no. 18-21 of this Canto tells us about sage Bhrigu. The first era of the 4-era celestial cycle is Satyug. This is also known as Devyug and the 'Vedic period' because fire sacrifices were the chief avenues for worshipping Gods, the Devas. Among the renowned sages who performed such sacrifices, one was sage Bhrigu who was the ancestor of Parashuram. Sri Ram has chided Parashuram and had explicitly told him that the powers that the latter boasts so much of are due to the good deeds done by his ancestors— see verse no. 16 of this Canto.]

तत्तथा कृतवान्रामो भार्गवो वचनान्पितुः ।।३१।।
प्राप्तवांश्च पुनस्तेजो भारद्वाज महामुने ।३१½।

Bhargav (Parashuram) did as was advised by the Pittars. Oh great sage Bharadwaj! He bathed in those holy sites and regained his lost 'Tej—i.e., he got back his lost energy, vitality, glory, majesty, radiance, potentials, strength and powers (31-31½).

एतद्यः श्रृणुयाद्वत्स रामचरित्रमुत्तमम् ।।३२।।
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तो विष्णुलोकं स गच्छति ।३२½।

Oh son (Bharadwaj)! Anyone who hears this magnificent and excellent story or episode pertaining to Sri Ram meeting Parashuram and showing him his divine form is freed from the ill effects of his sins and misdeeds, and he attains the divine abode of Vishnu, called Vaikunth (32-32½).

ततो रामो जानकीस्पृष्टपाणिः सूतैर्भक्त्या
मागधैः स्तूयमानः पुष्पासारैरास्तृतो देवसंघैः
स उत्तरान्कोसलानाजगाम ।।३३।।

After this interlude, Sri Ram held the hands of Janki (his wife Sita, the daughter of Janak) and being worshipped, honoured, praised, lauded, admired and glorified[1] by the royal bards and minstrels called Suts and Magadhs as well as by his devotees, he resumed his journey back home. The throng of Gods rained flowers over him and his party as they wended their way back to Ayodhya and entered the northern boarders of the country called Kaushal[2] (33).

[1]स्तूयमानः, [2]उत्तरान्कोसलानाजगाम

[Note :- (i) The Suts and Magadhs were professional singers employed by the kings to sing their glories and laud their achievements. (ii) Ayodhya was the capital city of the country known as Kaushal. It had geographical divisions, such as

the north and the east country. The place of Sita's parents was to the north of this country. So the marriage party reentered their kingdom from the northern borders located near the present day country called Nepal.]

Thus ends Canto 9 of the ancient epic Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing how and why Sri Ram showed his vast, macrocosmic divine form as Lord Vishnu to sage Parashuram.

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Canto 10
Sri Ram Meets Hanuman and shows him his 4-armed divine form as Vishnu

After Sri Ram and Laxman went to exile in the forest with Sita, she was abducted by the 10-headed Ravana. While frantically searching for her, the two brothers Sri Ram and Laxman came to Rishyamook Mountain where Sugriv, the exiled monkey king, lived out of fear of his brother Bali. When he saw them approaching, he thought they are out there on the behest of Bali to kill him. So he sent Hanuman down from the mountain to find out the fact. Hanuman and Sri Ram showed each other their true divine forms for a split second for identifying themselves to each other. Sri Ram revealed his form as Lord Vishnu and Laxman as Sheshnath, the legendary python on whom Lord Vishnu reclines in the Kshirsagar or the ocean of milk in the heavens. Though not specifically mentioned in the text, verse no. 12 clearly indicates that Hanuman revealed to him his truthful form, which was Rudra or Lord Shiva. This Canto is a sort of prologue to spiritual discourses between Sri Ram and Hanuman in the next 4 Cantos, nos. 11-14.

We must also note here that sage Valmiki has skipped all other parts of the story, between Sri Ram meeting Parashuram and his meeting with Hanuman, to cut short unnecessary details. The reason has been explained in the preface of this book. The reader will observe that those parts of the legendry story of Ramayan that

have already been narrated by Valmiki in detail in his classical epic 'Ramayan' have been given a goodbye in this book, and only those episodes which were necessary and thought important by Valmiki to fill in the gap left in his aforesaid epic have been mentioned here. We must remember that this Adbhut Ramayan describes only those parts of Sri Ram's story that have been kept secret and under wraps by Brahma and Valmiki till this was disclosed by the latter in this current book, the Adbhut Ramayan. The emphasis is on the divinity of Sita as Mother Nature personified and the killing of the thousand headed Ravana which is the focal point of this book.

अथ सीतालक्ष्मणाभ्यां सह केनापि हेतुना ।
जगाम विपिनं रामो दण्डकारण्यमाश्रितः ।।१।।

In due course of time, Sri Ram, along with Sita and Laxman, went to the forest for some reason and stayed there in a forest called Dandkaranya (1).

तत्र गोदावरीतीरे पर्णशालां विधाय सः ।
उवास कंचित्कालं वै मृगयामभिकारयन् ।।२।।

He built a thatched hut or cottage there on the banks of river Godavari and stayed there for some time, spending his time on occasional hunting expeditions (2).

रावणो राक्षसेन्द्रोऽथ कालपाशनियन्त्रितः ।
रामेण लक्ष्मेणनापि रहितां जानकीं ततः ।।३।।
कदाचिद्रावणो मोहाल्लङ्कायां तां न्यवासयत् ।३½।

After some time, the king of demons, the 10-headed Ravana, who was under the delusionary evil spell or influence of Kaal, the death God (i.e., was tied and shackled by the God of death who had cast his magic spell of delusions upon him, preparing the background for his ultimate death[1]), abducted Janki (Sita) in the absence of Sri Ram and Laxman. Out of his passion and lust ignited by delusions and ignorance (called Moha)[2], Ravana took her away and held her captive in Lanka, his capital city[3] (3-3½).

[2]कालपाशनियन्त्रितः, [2]मोह, [3]ल्लङ्कायां तां न्यवासयत्,

[Note :- It is not mentioned here that Sri Ram, who was all knowing, omniscient and the supreme Lord personified, knew

before hand what is to come. So he had hidden the real Sita in the custody of the Fire-God, and what Ravana managed to take away was merely a shadow of the true Sita. Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan tells us that Ravana could not realise the trick played upon him by Sri Ram because he hadn't touched Sita in order to take her away because he had simply 'scooped up' the ground from below the feet of Sita and transplanted her on to his chariot as if a person is transplanting a sapling from one place in the garden to another. Had he tried to hold her hands or grasp her by the body or her hair in order to pull her forcibly on to the chariot in order to kidnap her, the truth that she was merely a shadow must have been revealed to him and the whole story would have cracked and dismantled like a pack of cards. So this is the effect of delusion and ignorance called Moha and Maya that had enabled Sri Ram to successfully eliminate him.]

तामदृष्ट्वा ततो रामो लक्ष्मणश्च महाबलः ।।४।।
आटतुश्चाटवीं सर्वां सीतादर्शनलालसौ ।
रामस्य रुदतस्तस्य वाष्पवारिसमुद्भवा ।।५।।

Not finding her at their cottage, the most valorous, strong and powerful Sri Ram and Laxman wandered here and there in the forest, urgently and frantically searching for her, eager to see her once again. Streams of tears rolled down the eyes of Sri Ram as he wailed and lamented for her (4-5).

नदी वैतरणी चाभूच्चक्षुषोरश्रुवुद्भवा ।
वितरत्यश्रु वै यस्मादतो वैतरणीस्मृता ।।६।।

He wept so much that a river called 'Vaitarni' was formed by his tears. Since the river had its origin in tears shed in adverse and tormenting circumstances marked by sorrows, anguish, separation from one's beloved and seemingly insurmountable troubles, it was called by this name 'Vai Tarni' (6).

[Note :- There are two types of tears —one shed in joy and the other shed in extreme anguish and great pain. Sita was lost, and Sri Ram's tears were shed in sorrow. The word 'Tarani' means 'one that liberates and provides deliverance from sorrows and torments of this world', while the prefix

'Vai' means 'the opposite'. Hence, Vai + Tarani signifies a river that stands for one getting entangled in a web of sorrows, anguish and troubles which are most difficult to overcome.]

पितृणां तरणं यस्मान नृणां स्नानतर्पणात् ।
तेनापि कारणेनासौ नदी वैतरणी स्मृता ।।७।।

There is another river known by the same name of Vaitarni. The spirits of person's dead ancestors find liberation and deliverance[1] as well as fulfilment and contentedness[2] by bathing and offering libations in it[3] (7).

[1]तरणं, [2]यस्मान नृणां, [3]स्नानतर्पणात्

[Note :- This is a different mythological river. According to Purans, it flows in front of the gate of the God of death, Yam's place. It is believed that the spirits of dead ancestors have to take a bath in this river before they find liberation from their 'spirit' form. The annual ritual of offering oblation and libation to dead ancestors symbolically marks the occasion when they bathe in the river and pass on to liberation.]

नेत्रयोर्दूषिकायाश्च ताभिः शैलास्ततोऽभवन् ।
सुग्रीवेण वानरेण सख्यं कर्तु महामनाः ।।८।।
ऋष्यमूकमगाद्रामो लक्ष्मेणनानुजेन च ।८½।

The slime of his eyes that came down with the tears[1] formed mountains and hills when they dried up[2]. After that, the great and noble gentleman (Sri Ram)[3], in order to befriend the monkey king Sugriv (8), went to the mountain called Rishyamook, accompanied by his younger brother Laxman (8½). [8-8½]

[1]नेत्रयोर्दूषिकायाश्च, [2]ताभिः शैलास्ततोऽभवन्, [3]महामनाः,

[Note :- According to Valmiki's epic story 'Ramayan' and Tulsidas' 'Ram Charit Manas, Sri Ram had met Sabari after the abduction of Sita. It was she who had advised him to go and meet Sugriv who would help him in searching for and retrieving Sita.]

पञ्चभिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्द्ध सुग्रीवो नाम वानरः ।।९।।
यत्रास्ते वालिभ्यतः सोऽपश्यद्रामलक्ष्मणौ ।
चापबाणधरौ वीरौ ग्रसन्ताविव चाम्बरम् ।।१०।।

The monkey named Sugriv lived there along with 5 of his ministers (9) out of fear of his elder brother Bali. He saw the brave and

strong[1] Sri Ram and Laxman come that way. They held bows in their hands and appeared ready to 'devour the sky'[2] (i.e., it appeared that they were ready to conquer and annihilate the world if the need arises) (10). [9-10]

[1]वीरौ, [2]चापबाणधरौ ग्रसन्ताविव चाम्बरम्

[Note :- The word 'Grasanta' (ग्रसन्त) literally means 'to eclipse or devour'. When the shadow of the earth falls on the moon during the lunar 'eclipse', it is said the moon was 'devoured' by Rahu, the severed head of a demon. This is a figure of speech to indicate the angry demeanours and postures of Sri Ram and Laxman who were restlessly searching for Sita in the desolate and inhospitable forest. Therefore, they were very alert and vigilant for any unforeseen danger that might be lurking anywhere in the darkness of the forest. This made them look very fearful and ready to attack at the slightest provocation.]

तां दृष्ट्वा सुमहत्त्रस्तौ वालिपक्षावमन्यत ।
प्रास्थापयद्धनूमन्तं भिक्षुरूपेण वानरम् ।।११।।

When Sugriv saw them, he thought that they were Bali's sympathisers (or were sent by him to kill him, because Bali could not settle squares with his younger brother personally). Consequentially, he (Sugriv) was extremely terrified and tormented by fear[1]. Then he sent Hanuman in the form of a mendicant or a recluse monk, who goes around to beg for food[2], to meet Sri Ram and Laxman and find out the fact and the purpose of their visit (11).

[1]त्रस्तौ, [2]भिक्षुरूपेण वानरम्

[Note :- The cause of animosity and bad blood between Sugriv, the younger brother, and Bali, the elder brother, was pure misunderstanding. Briefly, it so happened that Bali was challenged for a duel by a demon called Mayavi (literally, the clever, deceitful one) whom Bali beat back. Fighting each other they entered a deep cave. Sugriv waited at the entrance of the cave for one month, and seeing blood streaming out of it, he thought that his brother has been killed by the demon. Fearing for his life, he shut the mouth of the cave with a heavy boulder and rushed back to the capital Kishkindha.

Much against his wishes, the ministers anointed him as the king. Meanwhile, Bali vanquished the demon and returned home to find Sugriv on the throne. Instead of clarifying the situation and finding out the truth about what has happened, he flew into a vicious rage because he thought that Sugriv had usurped the crown. Vowing revenge, he beat his younger brother black and blue and chased him away from the kingdom. Sugriv took refuge on Rishyamook because Bali suffered from a curse that if he ever came there, he would die. So, Sugriv felt secure on this mountain.]

आत्मानं दर्शयामास हनूमान्रामलक्ष्मणौ ।
को भवानिति चोक्तेऽथ चतुर्बाहुं किरीटिनम् ।।१२।।
शङ्खचक्रगदापाणि वनमालाविभूषितम् ।
श्रीवत्सवक्षसं देवं पीतवाससमच्युतम् ।।१३।।

Hanuman showed his true form to them[1]. Then he asked them who they were. After that, he (Hanuman) saw the form of Sri Ram with 4 arms[2], having a divine and radiant crown and tiara on his head[3] (12), holding a conch, the discus and the mace in his hands[4], adorned by a garland of marigold flowers[5], having the mark of Srivatsa on his chest[6] and wearing the garment known as Pitambar[7]. That form is known as 'Achuyt'[8] (i.e., one who can never fall from his immaculate and exalted stature; one who is imperishable, indestructible and eternal) (13). [12-13].

[1]आत्मानं दर्शयामास, [2]चतुर्बाहुं, [3]किरीटिनम्, [4]शङ्खचक्रगदापाणि, [5]वनमालाविभूषितम्, [6]श्रीवत्सवक्षसं, [7]पीतवास, [8]च्युतम्

[Note :- (i) The word 'Atma' indicates the true identity of a person as opposed to his physical bodily appearance. So, when Hanuman revealed his true identity to Sri Ram, it was that of Rudra or Lord Shiva whose incarnation Hanuman was. At this cue, Sri Ram decided to reveal to him his own true identity, and that was of Lord Vishnu with 4 arms. As is clear from the text, not much was said or asked between the two, Sri Ram and Hanuman. There was no better introduction than disclosing their true forms to each other in silence to remove any misgivings on either side.

(ii) 'Srivatsa' is the mark of sage Bhrigu's foot print on

Vishnu's chest. See also Canto 2, verse no. 22.

(iii) 'Pitambar' is a silk, seamless body wrapping yellow garment worn by Vishnu and all his incarnations, such as Ram, Krishna, Narsingh, Vaaman etc..]

लक्ष्मीं सरस्वतीभ्यां स संश्रितोभयपार्श्वकम् ।
ब्रह्मपुत्रैः सनन्दाद्यैः स्तूयमानं समन्ततः ।।१४।।
देवर्षिपितृगन्धर्वैः सिद्धविद्याधरोरगैः ।
सेव्यमानं महात्मानं पुण्डरीकविलोचनम् ।।१५।।

He (Hanuman) saw that he (Sri Ram in his divine true form as Vishnu) was being attended to by Goddesses Laxmi and Saraswati who were present on his either sides (Laxmi on the left and Saraswati on the right). His glories and praises were being sung by Brahma's son Sanand and others who stood surrounding him reverentially (14). The Gods, the celestial sage Narad and other sages called Dev Rishis, Pittars (spirit of dead ancestors), Gandharvas (celestial musicians; demi-Gods), Siddhas (mystics with divine powers), Vidyadhars (a type of demi-God who is senior to other demi-Gods such as Gandharvas and Kinnars), Urags (the legendary serpents and other reptiles) as well as great sages and seers and other great souls, were also accompanying them (Sanand and other sons of Brahma) in singing the glories of the Lord Vishnu (15). [14-15]

सहस्र सूर्यसङ्काशं शतचन्द्रशुभाननम् ।
फणासहस्रंमतुलं धारयन्तं च लक्ष्मणम् ।।१६।।
अनन्तं रामशिरसि आतपत्रं फणागणैः ।
दधानं सर्वलोकेशं नागसंघैश्च संस्तुतम् ।।१७।।

Hanuman saw the divine form of Laxman as the one thouasand hooded legendary serpent (called Sheshnath)[1], who was splendorous and dazzling like one thouasand suns[2] shining simultaneously, whose beautiful face resembled a hundred moons[3], who is unique, unparalleled and one of his kind[4], who is eternal and infinite[5]—standing there with all his thousand hoods spread like an umbrella over the head of Sri Ram[6]. He (Laxman) was being worshipped, honoured, praised and adored[7] by hordes of other great legendary serpents and reptiles[8] as the lord of all world[9] (16-17).

[1]फणासहस्रं, [2]सहस्र सूर्यसङ्काशं, [3]शतचन्द्रशुभाननम्, [4]मतुलं, [5]अनन्तं, [6]आतपत्रं फणागणैः, [7]संस्तुतम्, [8]नागसंघैश्च, [9]सर्वलोकेशं

आत्मानं दर्शयामास रामचन्द्रो हनूमते ।
तद्रूपं हनूमन्वीक्ष्य किमेतदिति विस्मितः ।।१८।।

When Sri Ram showed Hanuman his true form[1] (or, revealed to him his true identity as Lord Vishnu), the latter was astonished and awestruck, wandering[2] 'what is this'[3]? (18).

आत्मानं दर्शयामास, विस्मितः, किमेतदिति

क्षणं निमील्य नयने पुनः सोऽयपश्यदद्भुतम् ।
स्तुत्वा नत्वा च बहुधा सोऽबवीद्राघवं वचः ।।१९।।

He (Hanuman) closed his eyes in amazement for a second, opened them again to see the same strange and mysterious but marvelous, magnificent and stupendous sight[1]. Then Hanuman bowed his head[2] before Raghav repeatedly[3] and prayed to him[4], saying— (19).

[1]सोऽयपश्यदद्भुतम्, [2]नत्वा, [3]बहुधा, [4]स्तुत्वा,

अहं सुग्रीवसचिवो हनूमान्नाम वानरः ।
सुग्रीवेण प्रेषितोऽहं युवां कौ ज्ञातुमागतः ।।२०।।
दृष्ट्वा युवां च द्विभुजौ चापबाणधरौ परम् ।
आगत्य चान्यथा दृष्टं वद मे को भवानिति ।।२१।।

'I am Hanuman, the minister of the monkey (king) called Sugriv. He has sent me to determine who you are (20). Seeing that you hold a bow and arrow in your hands, he has construed that you have come here with some malefide intentions. Hence, tell me who you actually are?' (21). [20-21]

इति पवनसुतं तं व्याकुलं व्याहरन्तं
किमिति कथामितीदं कम्पमानं प्लवङ्गम् ।
कृतकरपुटमौलि संविधेयं ब्रुवन्तं
मधुरतरमुदारं रामचन्द्रोऽब्रवीत्तम् ।।२२।।

When Sri Ram saw the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) in a nervous, confused, perplexed and agitated state[1] after having a divine glimpse of Sri Ram's vast macrocosmic form as Vishnu, standing before him with a bowed head and a trembling body[2], folding the hands in front of the chest as a gesture of submission, respect and honour[3], Sri Ram Chandra replied to him in a sweet, pleasant, most comforting, benevolent, munificent and kind voice[4] (22).

[1]व्याकुलं, [2]कम्पमानं, [3]कृतकरपुटमौलि, [4]मधुरतरमुदारं,

Thus ends Canto 10 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing Hanuman's meeting with Sri Ram.

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Canto 11

Sri Ram describes profound metaphysical and spiritual concept to Hanuman highlighting the various aspects of 'Sankhya Shastra'

In this Canto, Sri Ram describes to Hanuman what is known as Sankhya Shastra (see verse no. 42). This body of knowledge was first propounded and postulated by sage Kapil and it is one of the 6 schools of Indian philosophy. It forms the basis of Vedanta which is the philosophy of the Upanishad; both these philosophies — Sankhya and Vedanta — coexist, complementing and supplementing each other just like the two wheels of a chariot. Basically, it deals with the Atma and its characteristics. Brief explanatory notes are added to the verses to bring out the meaning clearly. This Canto summarises the Sankhya philosophy in its essence; it is a sort of commentary summarising its essential tenets.

राम:प्राह हनूमन्तमात्मानं पुरूषोत्तम: ।
वत्स वत्स हनूमन्स्त्वं भक्तोयत्पृष्टवानसि ।।१।।
तत्तऽहं सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि शृणुष्वावहितो मम ।
आवच्चमेतद्विज्ञानमात्मगुह्यं सनातनम् ।।२।।

Purshottam Ram[1] (literally meaning the most excellent, the most exalted and the best human being; here referring to the supreme being in the form of Sri Ram) began to tell Hanuman about his Atma[2] which is the true identity, the pure and real conscious self of an individual.

He said, 'Oh son Hanuman[3]! Oh son, you are my sincere and ardent devotee[4]. I shall answer the question which you have asked me (in Canto 10, verse no. 12 and 18) —'Who are you?'

Listen carefully. This secret and mysterious but marvelously fascinating and profound knowledge about the Atma (soul)[5] is truthful, universal, immutable, irrefutable and eternal[6]. It should not be divulged to everyone (i.e., it should be given to only those people who are eligible and competent to acquire it, otherwise they will mock at it, deride and ridicule it in their utter ignorance) (1-2).

[1]राम: पुरूषोत्तम:, [2]आत्मानं, [3]वत्स हनूमन्स्त्वं, [4]वत्स भक्तो, [5]ज्ञानमात्मगुह्यं, [6]सनातनम्,

यन्न देवा विजानन्ति यतन्तोऽपि द्विजातय: ।
इदं ज्ञानं समाश्रित्य ब्रह्मभूता द्विजोत्तमा: ।।३।।
न संसारं प्रपश्यन्ति पूर्वेऽपि ब्रह्मवादिन: ।
गुह्याद्गुह्यतमं साक्षाद्गोपनीयं प्रयत्नत: ।।४।।

This supreme and profound truthful knowledge is not known even to the Gods[1] and the upper classes of people in society[2] (who are intelligent and wise and are supposed to have a better and higher level of understanding and intellect than people lower down in the rung of social hierarchy who are supposed to have inferior level of intellect). If this knowledge is acquired by making diligent efforts and sincere commitment[3], then it elevates an ordinary Brahmin called a Dwij to an exalted and senior stature which is equivalent to that of Brahma[4]. [That is, a person who is aware of the knowledge pertaining to Atma and Brahm becomes more respected, revered and honoured even among those who are generally given respect by the society. In fact, they attain the pinnacle of spiritual elevation by this knowledge and are worthy of special honour.] (3)

When those erudite, sagacious and wise ones, who were already aware of the Atma and Brahma[5], come to acquire this supreme truthful knowledge, they cease to 'see or perceive' the external illusionary and artificial world[6]. This most secret of knowledge[7] is to be carefully kept under guard and is not to be divulged to unworthy and incompetent persons (4). [3-4]

[1]देवा, [2]द्विजातय:, [3]समाश्रित्य, [4]द्विजोत्तमा:, [5]पूर्वेऽपि ब्रह्मवादिन:, [6]न संसारं प्रपश्यन्ति, [7]गुह्याद्गुह्यतमं

[Note :- (i) The word 'Dwij' (द्विज) refers to Brahmins who are the learned and wise teacher class of people in society. They are generally given blanket respect by virtue of their high birth. They learn the scriptures, but if this learning is

limited to mere 'letters' and they do not understand the 'spirit' of the words formed by the letters, and even if they do understand the 'letter as well as the spirit', they have doubts in the veracity of the scriptures, and even if they do not have doubts, they do not practice what they preach and that knowledge hasn't opened their 'inner eyes' sufficiently enough to enable them to realise that the world that they see is simply a 'mirage', an illusionary smoke screen, an 'image' and not the 'object' whose image it is, then they may be scholars of the highest degree and repute but they aren't categorised as 'being enlightened and realised souls'. They may be wise and clever enough to acquire wealth, fame and worldly glories with that knowledge, but they are 'stupid of the highest order' if they do not spiritually benefit from the supreme knowledge themselves which they preach others to acquire. This is the implied meaning of verse no. 3 — when a learned person sees that supreme Brahm in each and every element of the world, when he does not see the physical characteristic of the external world, when he does not distinguish between creatures based on their colour, class, nationality etc., but begin to see them all alike in their Atma, then they see the supreme, transcendental and sublime Brahm in each and every figure and shape of the world. They become mentally and intellectually elevated and stand on a high spiritual pedestal. It is only then that they are called the most exalted Brahmin 'द्विजोत्तमाः'.

Further, the word Dwijataye 'द्विजातयः' literally means 'the upper other castes', such as the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, besides the Brahmins. To include these other 2 classes of people who are mainly concerned with the protection of the society and taking care of its needs respectively, sage Valmiki intends to drive home the point that knowledge of Brahm is not a copyright of Brahmins alone. If a Vaishya is enlightened enough to 'see or perceive' the subtle, supreme Brahm in the whole visible external façade of this gross world, while a Brahmin 'sees or perceives' the world only in its gross form, then surely the former person (the Vaishya) is much superior

to the latter person (the Brahmin) in his spiritual elevation.]

वंशे भक्तिमतो ह्यस्य भवन्ति ब्रह्मवादिनः ।
आत्मा यः केवलः स्वच्छः शान्तः सूक्ष्मः सनातनः ।।५।।

Those people who know 'this fact' (i.e., are aware of the facts about the truthful nature of Atma and Brahm, and are enlightened enough not to be mislead about the falsehoods of this illusionary world), have devotees[1] of the Lord who are wise, erudite and enlightened about the essence of the supreme, transcendental and sublime Brahma[2] in their family and clan.

[Now, sage Valmiki elaborates and elucidates on 'this' most profound, elementary, sublime and eclectic, universally truthful, irrefutable and immutable knowledge which makes a man revered and enlightened. He said to Bharadwaj—] 'The Atma (soul) is the only entity which is one of its kind and pristine pure and immaculate[3], it is undiluted, uncorrupt and untarnished[4], it is peaceful, tranquil, serene and calm[5], it is subtle and microscopic[6], and it is eternal, everlasting, universal and truthful[7] (5).

[1]भक्तिमतो, [2]ब्रह्मवादिनः, [3]केवलः, [4]स्वच्छः, [5]शान्तः, [6]सूक्ष्मः, [7]सनातनः

अस्ति सर्वान्तरः साक्षाच्चिन्मात्रस्तमसः परः ।
सोऽन्तर्यामी स पुरुषः स प्राणः स महेश्वरः ।।६।।

It (the Atma) resides in the bosom of all that exists in this creation[1]. It is verily the pure, supreme, transcendental consciousness personified[2] and it is beyond the negative traits symbolised by such negative qualities as 'Tam' or darkness, ignorance, delusions, perversions, evils, misdeeds etc.[3]. It knows the inner thoughts and feelings of all the creatures because it resides in their bosom[4]; it is known by the name of 'Purush' (literally, a male, but here referring to the Supreme Being who is the Lord of the creation, the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic male aspect of creation)[5]. It is also known as 'Pran' or the vital wind which infuses the all-important factor called 'life' into an otherwise dead, gross creature[6], and it is none other than 'Maheshwar' (literally meaning the great Lord of creation, Lord Shiva)[7] (6).

[1]सर्वान्तरः, [2]साक्षाच्चिन्मात्रस्तमसः [3]परः, [4]सोऽन्तर्यामी, [5]पुरुषः, [6]प्राणः, [7]महेश्वरः

स कालाग्निस्तदव्यक्तं सद्यो वेदयति श्रुतिः ।

कस्माद्विजायते विश्वमत्रैव प्रविलीयते ।।७।।

The hymns of the Vedas assert that it is the 'Kalagni' (literally, the dooms day fire, or the great fire element which is synonymous with death)[1]; and it is the entity that has no attributes, that cannot be described or defined, that is invisible and beyond the purview of speech and perception[2]. The world has its origin[3] in it and collapses back into and coalesces with it[4] (7).

[1]कालाग्नि, [2]अव्यक्तं, [3]जायते, [4]प्रविलीयते

मायावी मायया बद्धः करोति विविधास्तनूः ।
न चाप्ययं संसरति न च संसारयेत्प्रभुः ।।८।।

It is the Atma that gets tied to the shackles created by the cunning and impostering 'Maya'[1] (the great powers of nature that create delusions, ignorance and hallucinations) to assume different bodies and forms[2]. In fact, it never moves on its own (i.e., it is steady and stable, it is still and unwavering)[3] and neither can anyone ever make it move (i.e., lose its innate eternal stability, calmness, peaceful demeanours, enlightened and contented nature)[4] (8).

[1]मायावी मायया बद्धः, [2]करोति विविधास्तनूः, [3]न च संसारये, [4]न चाप्ययं संसरति

[Note :- The Atma is sturdy and firmly rooted in enlightenment. But when it is veiled by the covering of ignorance, it sees the outside world through this sheet-class of ignorance and deception. The vision of the Atma gets affected or influenced by the taint of colour present in the sheet inclosing it from all the sides. Its vision or perception of the 'truth' gets influenced by the tainted glass sheet of ignorance and delusions surrounding it or encasing it from all the sides like a case of glass. As a result, it cannot see the 'truth' in its actual, real and untainted form.]

नायं पृथ्वी न सलिलं न तेजः पवनो नभः ।
न प्राणो न मनो व्यक्तं न शब्दः स्पर्श एव च ।।९।।

[Now starts the process of negation or elimination to describe the real essence of the Atma (soul), a process so typical of the Vedas—'Neti-Neti', i.e., 'neither this nor that'.]

'It' (Atma/soul) is not the earth[1], nor is it the water[2], the fire[3], the wind present in the sky[4], the sky or the space[5], the Pran (vital wind, breath)[6], and the 'Mana' (the mind)[7]. It is none of the things that are seen or observed[8], are heard of as words[9], and even felt by touch[10] (9).

[1]नायं पृथ्वी, [2]न सलिलं, [3]न तेजः, [4]पवनो, [5]नभः, [6]न प्राणो, [7]न मनो, [8]व्यक्तं, [9]न शब्दः, [10]स्पर्श एव च

न रूपरसगन्धाश्च नाहङ्कर्ता ना वागपि ।
न पाणिपादौ नो पायुर्न चोपस्थं प्लवङ्गम् ।।१०।।

'It' (Atma/soul) has neither any shape or form[1], nor any taste[2] or smell[3]. It has no 'Ahankar' (ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy and a sense of superiority)[4], and neither does it have any speech[5]. Oh Mahavir (Hanuman; literally meaning one who has great strength, powers and valour, one who is most brave and strong)! It has no legs and feet[6], no anus[7] and no genitals either[8] (10).

[1]न रूप, [2]रस, [3]गन्धाश्च, [4]नाहङ्कर्ता, [5]ना वागपि, [6]न पाणिपादौ, [7]नो पायुर्न, [8]चोपस्थं प्लवङ्गम्

न कर्ता न च भोक्ता च न प्रकृतिपूरूषौ ।
न माया नैव प्राणश्चैतन्यं परमार्थतः ।।११।।

'It' (Atma/soul) is neither a doer of deeds[1] nor someone who enjoys the rewards of those deeds or suffers from its consequences[2]. It is neither Nature (female aspect of creation, Prakriti), nor is it its male counterpart, the macrocosmic Purush[3]. It is neither 'Maya' (falsehoods, deceits and delusions as well as ignorance)[4] nor Pran (truthfulness and life)[5]. It is a supreme, transcendental, sublime, heavenly Spirit[6] that is pure consciousness personified[7] (11).

[1]न कर्ता, [2]न च भोक्ता, [3]च न प्रकृतिपूरूषौ, [4]न माया, [5]नैव प्राण, [6]परमार्थतः, [7]श्चैतन्यं

तथा प्रकाशतमसोः सम्बन्धोनोपपद्यते ।
तद्वदेव न सम्बन्धः प्रपञ्चपरमात्मनो ।।१२।।

Even as light and darkness[1] have no relation with each other[2], the delusions of this creation[3] and the supreme, transcendental and sublime Atma[4] have no relationship with each other[5] (12).

[1]प्रकाशतमसोः, [2]सम्बन्धोनो, [3]प्रपञ्च, [4]परमात्मनो, [5]न सम्बन्धः,

छायातरु यथा लोके परस्परविलक्षणौ ।
तद्वत्प्रपञ्चपुरुषो विभिन्नौ परमार्थत ।।१३।।

Just like a tree and its shadow have a strange and fascinating mutual

relationship in this world, the delusions and illusionary aspect of creation, including the ‘Purush’ aspect, is different from the transcendental, supreme Spirit which is the ultimate Truth (13).

[Note :- A tree casts a shadow; the tree is real while its shadow is not real. But the most important factor is the light of the sun —the sunlight —that makes it possible for the tree to cast its shadow; the shadow is formed because of the sunlight. Without the sun, there would be no sunlight and there would be no shadow. This is an example from the world. Plato had also used it with slight vaiation—he described the shadow on the wall of a cave. In the metaphysical realm, the Brahm is like the sun; his desire to create the cosmos produces the macrocosmic Viraat Purush even as the tree was produced on earth in the presence of sunlight and the chemical process of photosynthesis dependent on it. The Purush has an existence like that of the tree, and the dark shadows of delusions of Maya created by it are akin to the shadows of the tree in this world. The allusion of the tree and the shadow is used to show the relationship between the Atma and the creation.]

यद्यात्मा मालिनोऽवस्थौ विकारी स्यात्स्वभावतः ।
नहि तस्य भवेन्मुक्तिर्जन्मान्तरशतैरपि ।।१४।।

That Atma (here referring to the soul of the individual creature) which is veiled or over shadowed by darkness of ignorance and delusions[1], and which has faults, flaws and shortcoming[2] by nature or habit[3] —such an Atma of an individual can never find liberation and emancipation, called Mukti, from the horrors of this world[4] in a hundred years (14).

[1]मालिनोऽवस्थौ, [2]विकारी, [3]स्यात्स्वभावतः, [4]न्मुक्ति

पश्यन्ति मुनयो मुक्ताः स्वात्मानं परमार्थतः ।
विकारहीनं निर्दुःखमानन्दात्मानमव्ययम् ।।१५।।

Pious and holy sages, saints, seers, hermits and acetics[1] see or perceive their Atma as spiritually elevated and liberated[2], faultless and immaculate[3], without any sorrows, anguish and torments[4], blissful and happy[5] as well as an imperishable, eternal and infinite entity[6] (15).

[1]मुनयो, [2]मुक्ताः परमार्थतः, [3]वकारहीनं, [4]निर्दुःख, [5]मानन्द, [6]अव्ययम्

अहं कर्ता सुखी दुःखी कृशः स्थूलेति या मतिः ।
साप्यहंकृतिसम्बन्धादात्मन्यारोप्यते जनैः ।।१६।।

‘I am a doer[1], I am happy or sorrowful[2], I have a well-fed and robust body or an emaciated and decrepit body[3]’ —this is a misconception about the Atma that a man has due to the influence of Ahankar[4] (i.e., the delusionary effects caused by ignorance upon his intellect and mind). [That is, a person falsely accuses the Atma as having these characteristic due to the delusion created out of the ignorance about the truthful and real nature of the Atma. The creature forgets that his Atma is not the body which he erroneously identifies as his true identity.] (16).

[1]अहं कर्ता, [2]सुखी दुःखी, [3]कृशः स्थूलेति, [4]साप्यहंकृतिसम्बन्धादात्मन्यारोप्यते

[Note :- A creature is filled with pride when he thinks that he has done such and such deeds. Since he is the ‘doer’, he has to suffer or enjoy the bad or good results of a deed done by him even as a person is punished for any crime only if he is involved in it, directly or indirectly. With joy and happiness, his body shows signs of wellbeing, and in sorrows it becomes emaciated. But all this chain reaction is due to one basic fault of perception —the thought that ‘I have done such and such thing’. See note to verse no. 17 below also.]

वदन्ति वेद विद्वान्सः साक्षिणं प्रकृते परम् ।
भोक्तारमक्षयं बुद्ध्वा सर्वत्र समवस्थितम् ।।१७।।

Those who are expert in the knowledge contained in the Vedas call it (Atma/soul) ‘a witness’[1] to whatever is happening around it, and is beyond the purview of ‘Prakriti’ (or nature of a creature which means its habits, temperaments, natural inclination as well as the delusions and ignorance created by this world)[2]. They regard it (the Atma) as the entity for which all efforts in the world are made[3]. It is imperishable[4] as well as universally and uniformally omnipresent and all-pervading everywhere[5] (17).

[1]साक्षिणं, [2]प्रकृते परम्, [3]भोक्ता, [4]अक्षयं, [5]सर्वत्र समवस्थितम्

[Note :- (i) Verse no. 11 says that Atma is not a ‘doer of deeds’, and verse no. 16 says that the belief that ‘I am the doer’ is a fallacious conception about the Atma. It is wrong

to accuse the Atma as the doer of deeds. Then, if it's not the doer, what is it then? The answer is— 'it is a witness', verse no. 17. It does not participate nor gets emotionally involved in anything that is happening around it. Naturally therefore, it neither feels happy nor sorry at the results, good or bad. Again, since it is neutral and steady, it transcends any 'habits and tendencies' inherent to a creature. For example, a creature 'naturally' seeks happiness and veers away from sorrows; it is a natural, inborn habit of any creature. But the pure Atma/soul neither does seek happiness nor does it fear from sorrows.

(ii) By saying it is 'a Bhokta' 'भोक्ता' or the entity for which all efforts are made and which enjoys the rewards of those efforts, it is meant that the Atma silently, passively, without resistance, accepts what is offered to it. This is because it sees no distinction between any two given circumstances — e.g., hunger and being well-fed mean the same thing to it, simply because it is never hungry nor desires to eat anything.

(iii) 'Prakriti' 'प्रकृते' has two connotation as described in bracket in the above verse. See also Canto 12, verse no. 11 in this connection.]

तस्मादज्ञान मूलोऽयं संसारः सर्व देहि नाम् ।
अज्ञानादन्यथा ज्ञातं तच्च प्रकृतिसङ्गतम् ।।१८।।

It is the lack of truthful knowledge about 'it' (Atma/soul) that creates the illusion that this physical world is at the root or basic cause and the basis of all the creatures of the creation[1] having a physical body with a name[2]. The knowledge that is the opposite of this ignorance -based 'lack of knowledge'[3], pertains to the macrocosmic Nature or Prakriti[4] (18).

[1]मूलोऽयं संसारः, [2]सर्व देहि नाम्, [3]अज्ञानादन्यथा ज्ञातं, [4]प्रकृतिसङ्गतम्

नित्योदितः स्वयंज्योतिः सर्वगः पुरुषः परः ।
अहङ्कारोविवेकेन कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ।।१९।।

That divine 'Purush' is supreme, transcendental and sublime[1], is eternally risen (i.e., he never sets or never comes to an end, or is perpetually enlightened and wise)[2], is self illuminated[3], and is able to reach the most inaccessible of places (i.e., he can go everywhere because he is immanent and omnipresent)[4]. Such a magnificent

Being, when Ahankar casts its delusionary and dark shadow upon him, becomes ignorant of his true, glorious identity. In the absence of this awareness and wisdom, he begins to think that he is a 'doer of deeds'[5] (and subsequently gets bogged down in the chain of events set rolling by this single misconception) (19).

[1]पुरुषः परः, [2]नित्योदितः, [3]स्वयंज्योतिः, [4]सर्वगः, [5]अहङ्कारोविवेकेन कर्ताहमिति मन्यते

पश्यन्ति ऋषयो व्यक्तं नित्यं सदसदात्मकम् ।
प्रधानं प्रकृतिं बुद्ध्वा कारणं ब्रह्मवादिनः ।।२०।।

Wise sages and seers 'evidently and manifestly see'[1] that eternal, universal, truthful, all-pervading, omnipresent pure consciousness[2] in its true form. [That is, they realise that the whole physical world they see with their eyes is a manifested form, a revelation of that Supreme Being called 'Purush'. The world is an evidence of the glorious, magnificent and marvelous Purush (Being) even as an image in a mirror is an irrefutable proof of the primary object that forms its image in the mirror.] Those erudite, sagacious and wise persons who are well-versed in the knowledge of Brahm[3] realise that it is the basic and primary cause of creation of Prakriti[4] ('Nature' as the crucible of the creation, as well as the 'nature' as defined by the words habits, temperaments, inherent tendencies and inclination of a creature). This knowledge, this enlightenment, this erudition and this awareness makes them experts on Brahm[5] (20).

[1]पश्यन्ति व्यक्तं, [2]नित्यं सदसदात्मकम्, [3]ब्रह्मवादिनः, [4]प्रधानं प्रकृतिं कारणं, [5]बुद्ध्वा

तेनात्र सङ्गता ह्यात्मा कूटस्थोऽपि निरञ्जनः ।
आत्मानमक्षरं ब्रह्म नावबुद्ध्यन्ति तत्त्वतः ।।२१।।

When that subtle, transcendental, secret, exalted, supreme, eternal, steady, immutable and imperishable 'Kutastha Purush'[1], who is faultless, without blemishes and shortcomings, is infinite and measureless, is immaculate and pure, is invisible and subtle, and is divine and holy (collectively called Niranjan)[2], becomes veiled in ignorance about the essential truth of his Atma[3], he forgets or does not realise that his truthful Atma is the 'Akshar Brahm'[4], which literally means an 'imperishable' Brahm, or the supreme 'word' that is a representative of Brahm (21).

[1]कूटस्थोऽपि, [2]निरञ्जनः, [3]नावबुद्ध्यन्ति तत्त्वतः, [4]आत्मानमक्षरं ब्रह्म

अनात्मन्यात्मविज्ञानं तस्माद्दुःखं तथेतरत् ।
रागद्वेषादयो दोषाः सर्वभ्रान्तिनिबन्धनाः ।।२२।।

He misconceives that the Atma is present even in those entities that are 'non-Atma'[1]. [That is, he mistakenly believes that what is false, illusionary and artificial, viz., the mundane world, as we see it, is true. He forgets that the Atma is the only truthful entity; the rest are all non-Atmas or falsehoods.] This misconception leads to sorrows and anguish, restlessness and torments[2]. 'Raag and Dwesh' (attachments and hatreds, endearments and ill-wills)[3] are faults and evils[4] that have their existence or are present only due to misconception about the Atma. [That Atma is the same in all the creatures —it is the same in an enemy as well as in a friend. It is also indistinguishable from the Atma of the person who looks at others as his enemy or a friend.] Hence, to have endearments towards one person and hate another is a fallacy created by the influence of delusions, ignorance and misconception about the Atma[5] (22).

[1]अनात्मन्यात्मविज्ञानं, [2]तस्माद्दुःखं, [3]रागद्वेषा, [4]दोषाः, [5]सर्वभ्रान्तिनिबन्धनाः

कार्ये ह्यस्य भवेदेषा पुण्यापुण्यमिति श्रुतिः ।
तद्वशादेव सर्वेषां सर्वदेहसमुद्भवः ।।२३।।

The Vedas affirm that righteousness and unrighteousness is determined by whether the deeds are good or bad, noble or ignoble, worthy or unworthy, honourable or dishonourable, graceful or disgraceful[1]. All the creatures that have a body are bound by their deeds which determine which new body they will get upon rebirth as a composite effect of all the deeds done by them in the present life (23).

[1]पुण्यापुण्यमिति कार्ये,

नित्य सर्वत्रगो ह्यात्मा कूटस्थो दोषवर्जितः ।
एकः स भिद्यते शक्त्या मायया न स्वभावतः ।।२४।।

The Atma/soul is an eternal, infinite and universal entity[1] that is all pervading, immanent, omnipresent and all-encompassing[2]. That entity which is subline, transcendental, esoteric, exalted, supreme, eternal, steady, immutable and imperishable (Kutastha—see also verse no. 21)[3] as well as the only one of its kind, unique and unparalleled[4], appears to have myriad different forms and shapes[5].

This is due to the faults and flaws in conception and perception created by Maya (the delusions and ignorance about the absolute Truth)[6] (24).

[1]नित्य, [2]सर्वत्रगो, [3]कूटस्थो, [4]एकः, [5]स भिद्यते, [6]दोष मायया स्वभावतः

[Note :- The Atma is the invisible atom like microscopic power house which is the same in all the creatures. It is also the basic unit of the supreme Purush or Being who is the macrocosmic, all-encompassing and all-representing form of creation. This is a basic and fundamental truth. But ignorance of this truth creates a canvas having so many different colours, shades and hues of the pictures known as a colourfully variable creation or cosmos. To illustrate the point, we take the help of a 'water molecule' consisting of two atoms of hydrogen (H_2) and one atom of oxygen (O_2) bonding together to form the basic ingredient of creation known as water. But those who do not know the basic and universal truth about water, give hundreds of names to it —such as, water of a well, a pond, a river, and ocean or sea etc., water which is cold, hot, warm etc., water which is potable and not potable, water which is hard and soft, heavy and light, clean, turbid or polluted, crystal clear and slimy, water having different colours —emerald green, crystal blue, blood red and golden yellow, water that is torpid and sluggish of a shallow rivulet or a cascading, bubbling, gushing, foaming and frothing water of a waterfall, water as moisture, as vapour, as steam, as rain, as snow, as hail, as ice, as mist or as dew. On the contrary, a wise and enlightened person will see nothing else but two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen in the element simply known as water.]

तस्मादद्वैतमेवाहुर्मुनयः परमार्थतः ।
भेदोऽव्यक्तस्वभावेन सा च मायात्मसंश्रया ।।२५।।

That is why wise sages and seers call that subtle and universal Truth[1] as non-dual or Advaitya[2]. To treat that entity that is by nature beyond comprehension, subtle, indescribable, non-dual, sublime, supreme and trancendental[3] as having a 'dual existence'[4] (or, distinguishing between the visible aspect of creation and the non-visible Atma

pervading throughout it, to segregate and classify the creatures into imaginary categories, to have the notion of you and me, Atma and Purush, Purush and Nature, animate and inanimate world, friend and foe, male and female, young and old, man and animal, low and high etc.)[4] is known as Maya (delusion and ignorance associated with this world and the Atma)[5] (25).

[1]परमार्थत:, [2]अद्वैत, [3]ऽव्यक्त, [4]भेदो, [5]मायात्मसंश्रया

यथाहि धूमसम्पर्कान्नाकाशो मलिनो भवेत् ।
अन्त:करणजैर्भावैरात्मा तद्वन्नलिप्यते ।।२६।।

Even as a contact with smoke[1] appears to make the sky[2] look hazy and unclear[3] (but it is not actually hazy and unclear, because it is not at all affected whether or not smoke is present in it), the Atma also does not get affected[4] by the notions, inherent tendencies and natural inclinations present as an innate, integral nature of a creature[5] (26).

[1]धूमसम्पर्क, [2]आकाशो, [3]न्ना मलिनो भवेत्, [4]तद्वन्नलिप्यते, [5]अन्त:करणजैर्भावैरात्मा

[Note :- The innate nature and behaviour of a creature are determined by different Vasanas or Vrittis, or the worldly passions and inherent tendencies that it has. The Atma is unblemished and untainted by these notions, but is nevertheless blamed or accused of the consequences because it is the de-facto Lord or Master of creation and its faults. It cannot absolve itself of its responsibilities from these consequences. But this situation arises only when the creature thinks, though erroneously and fallaciously, that it is the 'doer' of any deed. This thought is provoked in it due to its ignorance about the immaculate nature of its pure self, which is the Atma. As soon as this wisdom sprouts in its bosom, the creature gets instant freedom from being affected by the different delusionary notions simply because it treats itself as the uncorrupt and non-dual Atma, which is merely a witness and an observer of all that transpires around it in this world, instead of treating his body, which does the deeds, as his true self and getting unnecessarily involved in the deeds. See also verse nos. 11, 12, 17 and 18 in this context.]

यथा स्व प्रभया भाति केवल: स्फटिकोपल: ।
उपाधिहीनो विमलस्तथैवात्मा प्रकाशते ।।२७।।

Even as a piece of polished crystal or quartz appears bright, radiant and bedazzled with illumination[1], this untainted, uncorrupt and pristine pure Atma[2], which has no attributes of its own[3], also appears to be self illuminated[4] (27).

[1]स्फटिक, [2]विमलस्तथैवात्मा, [3]उपाधिहीनो, [4]स्व प्रभया भाति,

[Note :- Pure crystal has no light of its own but it reflects the light falling on it. Similarly, the Atma/soul reflects the glory of Brahm as it is reflected form it. The various tendencies, inclinations, habits, passion etc. of a creature cast a shadow upon the Atma, and for an observer the Atma appears to posses these qualities because though they reflect from its surface but appear to come from within it even as the crystal appear to be variously coloured under the effects of different shades of light falling on it but stupid people say that the 'crystal has the colour'. See verse no. 30 below.]

ज्ञानस्वरूपमेवाहुर्जगदेतद्विचक्षणा: ।
अर्थस्वरूपमेवाज्ञा: पश्यन्त्यन्ये कुबुद्धय: ।।२८।।

Erudite, wise, sagacious and enlightened ones who have the eyes of wisdom and deep insight, intelligence and discriminatory powers[1], perceive this external facade of the world with their eyes of wisdom and with the perspective of 'Gyan' (truthful knowledge of essential truth)[2], while those who have corrupted, pervert, evil and ignorant minds[3] look at it or perceive it with a materialistic view point, with a materialist perspective of cause and effect, meaning and logic, benefits and losses etc.[4] (28).

[1]तद्विचक्षणा:, [2]ज्ञानस्वरूपमेवाहुर्जगदे, [3]कुबुद्धय:, [4]अर्थस्वरूपमेवाज्ञा: पश्यन्त्यन्ये

कूटस्थो निर्गुणो व्यापी चैतन्यात्मा स्वभावत: ।
दृश्यते ह्यर्थरूपेण पुरुषंर्भ्रान्तदृष्टिभि: ।।२९।।

The Atma —which has the epithets such as 'Kutastha' (i.e., being sublime, transcendental, exalted, supreme, eternal, steady, immutable and imperishable)[1], 'Nirguna' (i.e., without any qualities, virtues, attributes and characteristics, either good or bad)[2] and 'Vyapi' (i.e., all pervading, omnipresent, immanent and all encompassing)[3] —is in fact, by nature, pure and unadulterated consciousness[4]. But those with a defective vision and deluded by

ignorance[5] see or perceive it with the same materialistic objective view point with which they try to judge the rest of the world[6] (29).

[1]कूटस्थ, [2]निर्गुणो, [3]व्यापी, [4]चैतन्यात्मा स्वभावतः, [5]भ्रान्त दृष्टिभिः, [6]ह्यर्थरूपेण,

यथा संलक्ष्यते व्यक्तः केवलः स्फटिको जनैः ।
रक्तिकाव्यवधानेन तद्वत्परम पूरुषः ।।३०।।

Just like a pure piece of crystal appears red-tinged to people when red light falls on it (in other words, the colourless crystal appears red coloured due to the influence of the red light covering it like a translucent envelop)[1], the supreme, transcendental Purush (Supreme Being who is the macrocosmic form of the Atma) similarly appears to have so many attributes when he is incased in a body. [Or, in other words, when that supreme Purush covers himself with a sheath known as the gross and physical body having so many characteristic features, he begins to show as many characteristics as are present in that covering, the body][2] (30).

[1]संलक्ष्यते स्फटिको रक्तिकाव्यवधानेन, [2]तद्वत्परम पूरुषः

[Note :- The Atma, whether of the individual at the micro-level or the cosmos at the macro-level, is subtle, invisible, attributeless and all pervading. It is pure and uncorrupt like the crystal. It has no virtues of its own other than purity and non-corruption. But when this Atma assumes and incases itself with a gross covering which has certain definable features —such as having a well defined organs, having a complexion and physical features, doing different deeds, being visible and can be touched and felt, the Atma appears to have acquired all these features in it. For an observer, that Atma now appears to be recognizable by virtue of those features; he observes a man and a woman, a child and an old man, a man and an animal, a lion and a dog, and not the entity known as Atma which is the same in the whole creation; the Atma actually does not do anything, it does not have any features, it does not have any organs or complexion.]

तस्मादात्माक्षरः शुद्धो नित्यः सर्वगतोऽव्ययः ।
उपासितव्यो मन्तव्यः श्रोतव्यश्च मुमुक्षुभिः ।।३१।।

That is why the truthful entity known as Atma is adorable and worthy

of worship, glorification and honour[1]. It is imperishable[2], pure[3], eternal[4], all pervading[5] and without an end[6]. That is why it is also worthy of contemplation and mediation, thinking about and pondering deeply on[7]. That is why those who desire liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle them to this illusionary and artificial world, who seek emancipation and salvation[8], should hear and learn about it[9] (instead of wasting their time on fruitless pursuits, chatter, gossip and endless debates and discourses) (31).

[1]उपासितव्यो, [2]अक्षरः, [3]शुद्धो, [4]नित्यः, [5]सर्वगतो, [6]ऽव्ययः, [7]मन्तव्यः, [8]मुमुक्षुभिः, [9]श्रोतव्यश्च

यदा मनसि चैतन्यं भाति सर्वत्रगं सदा ।
योगिनोऽव्यवधानेन तदा सम्पद्यते स्वयम् ।।३२।।

At the time all-pervading, omnipresent and all-encompassing[1] pure consciousness[2] makes its appearance felt inside the heart (Mana)[3] of a Yogi[4] (i.e., when an ascetic becomes aware of the presence of the Atma inside his own heart), he becomes free from all the hurdles, distractions, confusions and doubts[5], and consequentially is successful in establishing contact with that conscious factor[6] (32).

[1]सर्वत्रगं, [2]चैतन्यं, [3]मनसि, [4]योगिनो, [5]ऽव्यवधानेन, [6]सम्पद्यते स्वयम्,

यदा सर्वाणि भूतानि स्वात्मन्येवाभि पश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते स्वयम् ।।३३।।

[Verse nos. 33 and 34 are one of the great sayings of the scriptures and one of the pedestals of enlightenment. They present the non-dual view of creation.]

A person who sees all the creatures or Bhuts[1] of the creation in his own Atma[2], and at the same time, sees himself or his own Atma as being present or residing in the bosom of all those creatures[3] —only such a person is eligible, competent and worthy, and he is the one who has the required aptitude and caliber, to attain Brahma[4] (33).

[1]सर्वाणि भूतानि, [2]स्वात्मन्येवाभि पश्यति, [3]सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं, [4]ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते स्वयम्

[Note :- (i) This is the non-dual approach of Vedanta. A person who is wisened of the elementary and fundamental basis of Vedantic tenets knows that the worthwhile primary factor which is universally present in all the creatures in this creation is the Atma/soul. This Atma/soul is synonymous with

pure conscious and transcendental Brahm. So, when he interacts with anyone, he does not interact with anyone who is different from himself, or he does not treat the other creature as 'another' one as such; he believes he is interacting with Brahm in the form of the Atma residing in that creature, and the creature's Atma is the same as his own. The attainment of Brahm becomes such an easy task for him, so to say, because his each interaction with this world makes him interact with Brahm. For example, when he talks with his friend, he is not talking with a human being, but with Brahm.

(ii) The word 'Bhut' 'भूत' refers to the 5 elementary and subtle elements that constitute this gross physical world as we see it. These elements are the following— space/sky, air/wind, water, fire or energy/Tej and earth. They are like the building blocks of creation.

यदा सर्वाणि भूतानि स्वात्मन्येव न पश्यति ।
एकीभूतः परेणासौ तदा भवति केवलः ।।३४।।

When he has become wise and enlightened enough to see all the creatures or Bhuts of this creation[1] in his own self, i.e., sees them as being indistinguishable from himself[2], then such a person becomes one and inseparable from those Bhuts[3]. As a consequence, he finds oneness with the supreme and universal Brahma[4] (34).

[1]सर्वाणि भूतानि, [2]स्वात्मन्येव पश्यति, [3]एकीभूतः, [4]परेणासौ भवति केवलः

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि स्थिताः ।
तदासावमृतीभूत क्षेमं गच्छति पण्डितः ।।३५।।

When all the desires of the heart cease, or they are exhausted and annihilated[1], then that wise one[2] becomes blissful and contented as if he has drunk the ambrosia called 'Amrit'[3] which is primarily concerned with providing welfare and happiness to all the creatures or Bhuts of this creation[4] (35).

[1]सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा हृदि स्थिताः, [2]पण्डितः, [3]तदासावमृतीभूत, [4]क्षेमं गच्छति

[Note :- 'Desires' are at the root of all discontent and unhappiness because a man spends his whole life in trying to satisfy them, but is unable to do it completely. Even if he does succeed in satisfying all the current desires, newer ones go on cropping up every now and then in the future. So, when the desires are annihilated or burnt or removed or eliminated or vanquished, then there will be nothing to trouble the creature anymore again. There will be no such situation as 'unfulfilled desires' leading to endless and perpetual restlessness and agitations. The result is 'Amrit-like' peace, tranquility and bliss.

यदा भूतपृथग्भावमेकस्थमनुपश्यति ।
तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते तदा ।।३६।।

When that 'Pandit' (see verse no. 35), i.e., a person who is wise, expert, erudite, sagacious and learned, sees or perceives all the separate and multifaceted parts or the innumerable myriad forms that those individual elements of creation called Bhuts have taken[1] at a single plane (i.e., when he ceases to see or perceive differences in a creatures and their elementary forms, the different Bhuts, then all the differences, schisms and variations lose their significance and importance)[2]. Everything boils down to one single element, or one single point, from where or which they have all emerged or sprang up or sprouted to create an illusion of divergence and multifacetedness in the form of this myriad variation of the creation. Such wisdom enables that person to have a wide and broad perspective of Brahm as the one who incorporates in itself the vast, multifaceted, innumerable variations of Bhuts, in their various permutations and combinations, that constitute this world[3] (36).

[1]भूतपृथग्भाव, [2]मेकस्थमनुपश्यति, [3]विस्तारं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते

यदा पश्यति चात्मायं केवलं परमार्थतः ।
मायामात्रं जगत्कृत्स्नं तदा भवति निर्वृतः ।।३७।।

When he is spiritually elevated and enlightened enough[1] to perceive or realise his true self[2] as only 'one', i.e., as the non-dual Atma[3], and sees the external, artificial and mundane world as nothing else but delusions created by ignorance (Maya)[4], then he is deemed to be liberated and emancipated, or become a 'Nivrit'[5] (i.e., person who has finished his burdensome task and become free form obligations) (37).

[1]परमार्थतः, [2]चात्मायं, [3]केवलं, [4]मायामात्रं जगत्कृत्स्नं, [5]भवति निर्वृतः

यदा जन्मजरादुःखव्याधीनामेकभेषजम् ।
केवलं ब्रह्मविज्ञानं जायतेऽसौ तदा शिवः ।।३८।।

When he finds that supreme enlightenment of Brahma[1] as the only remedy to eliminate the numerous miseries, torments and anguish[2] caused by birth, old age and death[3], it is only then that he is deemed to be like 'Shiva' —he becomes wise, enlightened, renunciate, auspicious, contented, peaceful and blissful[4] (38).

[1]ब्रह्मविज्ञानं, [2]व्याधीनामेकभेषजम्, [3]जन्मजरादु:ख, [4]ऽसौ शिव:

यथा नदी नदा लोके सागरेणकतां ययु: ।
तद्वदात्माक्षरेणासौ निष्कलेनैकतां व्रजेत् ।।३९।।

Even as rivers and their tributaries[1] in the world go and fall into the ocean to become one with and inseparable and indistinguishable from it[2], this faultless Atma[3] too merges with the imperishable 'one' (i.e., Brahm) to become inseparable and indistinguishable from it[4] (39).

[1]नदी नदा लोके, [2]सागरेणकतां, [3]तद्वदात्मा, [4]अक्षरेणासौ निष्कलेनैकतां व्रजेत्

तस्माद्विज्ञानमेवास्ति न प्रपञ्चों न संस्थिति: ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं लोके विज्ञानं तेन मुह्यति ।।४०।।

Such deceptive knowledge about the Atma[1] vis-à-vis the world is the cause of creating all illusions of reality about the latter which is, in fact, artificial, unreal and delusionary in nature and not the actual truth and reality as it appears to be[2]. A creature is shrouded in a veil of ignorance and deception[3] and thinks that what he sees and observes and what he deduces from the sight and from what he observes in this world[4] is a well-concerned, properly weighed, thoughtful, wise and empirical conclusion or deduction based on wisdom and knowledge[5] (whereas in fact, it is not!) (40).

[1]तस्माद्विज्ञान, [2]प्रपञ्चों न संस्थिति:, [3]अज्ञानेनावृतं, [4]लोके तेन मुह्यति, [5]विज्ञानं

[Note :- The Atma is surrounded by a veil or shroud of ignorance which is like a plastic or glass transparent sheet, wrapping it from all the sides. No matter how clear and transparent that sheet might be, but it is not the same as the option of seeing and observing the truth and reality of the world direct without the intervening medium of the sheet representing ignorance and deception. So, any hint, any tinge of colour in this surrounding sheet of plastic or glass covering will make the Atma see the outside world with that particular tinge or shade of colour that appears in the surrounding sheet.

Since it has no other way to determine the truth —other than removing the surrounding plastic or glass sheet itself —the Atma begins to think that the tinged world really, indeed, has that colour; i.e., the tinge is for real. But, as we see, this colour is misleading and an incorrect interpretation of fact, because it is not actually the colour of the world but is due to the presence of a tinged intervening sheet of glass or plastic.

This is what is meant in this verse. The creature 'thinks' that it is seeing or viewing or observing this world with the eyesight of wisdom and erudition, but it is being mislead by this 'tinged or corrupted' biased mental vision of the actual truth and reality by the presence of ignorance and delusion caused by Agyan, or lack of truthful knowledge. In brief, what apparently appears to be the truth and the real fact is in fact not so; it is a 'tainted, corrupted, biased and untruthful' perception and view of the real Reality and truthful Truth!]

तज्ज्ञानं निर्मलं सूक्ष्मं निर्विकल्पं यदव्ययम् ।
अज्ञानमिति तत्सर्व विज्ञानमिति मे मतम् ।।४१।।

That entity (the Atma) is pristine pure[1], most subtle and sublime[2], one of its kind and without an alternative[3], and it is imperishable and immortal[4]. It is out of delusion inspired ignorance that it appears to have so many forms with so many illusionary characteristics and definations[5]. According to me (Sri Ram)[6], this awareness itself is called 'Vigyan' (or the truthful awareness of the Reality, the truthful Truth that is irrefutable, immutable, empirical and arrived at by rational logic, experimentation, discussion and rigorous test as to its veracity)[7] (41).

[1]निर्मलं, [2]सूक्ष्मं, [3]निर्विकल्पं, [4]अव्ययम्, [5]अज्ञानमिति तत्सर्व, [6]मे मतम्, [7]विज्ञानमिति

एतत्ते परमं सांख्यं भावितं ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
सर्ववेदान्तसारं हि योगस्तत्रैक चित्तता ।।४२।।

This is the supreme knowledge postulated and elucidated by the Indian school of philosophy called 'Sankhya Shastra'[1] which is an excellent exposition and elucidation on the essence of Vedanta[2]. This is also the aim of Yoga (contemplation and meditation)[3] —to inculcate concentration of mind upon the Pure Consciousness[4] (42).

सांख्यं, सर्ववेदान्तसारं, योगस्तत्रैक, चित्तता

[Note :- The concept of Sankhya 'सांख्य' and Sankhya Shastra 'सांख्य शास्त्र' is one of the 6 great schools of Indian philosophy. It was first propounded by sage Kapil. It has been described in detail in note to verse no. 118 of canto no. 25 of this book.

(ii) The word 'Vedanta' means literally 'the end of the Vedas' and they are also called the Upanishads. The different tenets, axioms and maxims contained in the canons of the Vedas were explained by ancient sages and seers to their disciples, and their teachings were compiled to form the Upanishads. These texts were generally appended at the end of a particular section of the Veda to explain the relevant part of the Veda. The one single thread which is common to all the Upanishads is the non-dual nature of Atma and Brahm, their interrelationships, and the relationship between them and the rest of the creation. The philosophy of the Upanishads and Sankhya are very much alike. Whereas this Canto 11 deals primarily with the Sankhya philosophy, the next Canto no. 12 deals with the Upanishadic philosophy and the reader will find a striking similarity between them.]

योगात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं ज्ञानाद्योगः प्रजायते ।
योगज्ञानाभियुक्तस्य नावाप्यं विद्यते क्वचित् ।।४३।।

Yoga (contemplation and meditation, concentration of mind and attention) helps in acquiring Gyan (wisdom, erudition and knowledge)[1]. With Gyan, Yoga is bolstered and intensified[2]. A person who is blessed with a combination of both Gyan and Yoga[3], nothing remains impossible for him[4] (43).

[1]योगात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं, [2]ज्ञानाद्योगः प्रजायते, [3]योगज्ञानाभियुक्त, [4]नावाप्यं विद्यते क्वचित्

[Note :- To learn anything, concentration of mind and diligent efforts by the body are very essential. Again, when one starts acquiring knowledge by the study of the scriptures (or for that matter, any body of knowledge, whether it be science, art, commerce, philosophy, management etc.), his 'awareness of the truth' is gradually enhanced. His thought processes under go change and he starts to focus more and more on the subject of his study. For example, the study of the scriptures tells him about the futility of worldly pursuits; a person who becomes aware of this knowledge about the futility of pursuing worldly objects stops pursuing them, resulting in him becoming peaceful, tranquil and serene. Hence, a person who has both knowledge as well as control over his mind and body, who has 'Gyan' as well as 'Yoga', can achieve success in anything he does.

यदेव योगिनो यान्ति सांख्यं तदभिगम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स तत्त्ववित् ।।४४।।

Both the philosophies of Sankhya and Yoga[1] walk the same path (i.e., they stress the same principles, prescribe the same tenets and give the same advice to their followers)[2]. A person who sees uniformity and oneness[3] in the teachings of Yoga and Sankhya philosophies is indeed an expert in the essentials of Reality and Truth[4] (44).

[1]सांख्यं च योगं च, [2]तदभिगम्यते, [3]पश्यति एकं, [4]तत्त्ववित्

अन्ये च योगिनो वत्स ऐश्वर्यासक्तचेतसः ।
मज्जन्ति तत्र तत्रैव सत्त्वात्मैक्यमिति श्रुतिः ।।४५।।

Oh son (Hanuman)! Those Yogis (ascetics) who yearn for wealth, fame, fortune, supremacy, glory, grandeur, power and pelf[1] get tied down to them or get entangled in their web and bogged down in their pursuit[2]. These are not the 'truths'. The basic truth is the conscious, pure and truthful Atma —this is the axiomatic tenet of the Vedas[3] (45).

[1]ऐश्वर्यासक्तचेतसः, [2]मज्जन्ति तत्र तत्रैव, [3]सत्त्वात्मैक्यमिति श्रुतिः,

यत्तत्सर्वगतं दिव्यमैश्वर्यमचलं महत् ।
ज्ञानयोगाभियुक्तस्तु देहान्ते तदवाप्नुयात् ।।४६।।

That entity (Atma/soul) is omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing[1]; is divine and glorious[2], is great and stupendous[3], and is majestic, magnificent and profound[4]. It is steady, unwavering, unmoving and everlasting[5]. Such a majestic and grand Atma is attained by simultaneously following the path of Gyan (acquisition of truthful knowledge by the help of the wisdom, discrimination and enlightenment) as well as Yoga (contemplation, meditation, deep thought and concentration of mind)[6]. By doing so, a creature successfully reaches its goal (which is the supreme Atma, the Brahm)

at the time of its death[7] (46).

[1]सर्वगतं, [2]दिव्य, [3]मैश्वर्य, [4]महत्, [5]मचलं, [6]ज्ञानयोगाभियुक्तस्तु, [7]देहान्ते तदवाप्नुयात्

एष आत्माहमव्यक्तो मायावी परमेश्वरः ।
कीर्तितः सर्ववेदेषु सर्वात्मा सर्वतोमुखः ।।४७।।

I am that attributeless, unmanifest, indefinable, invisible[1] and maverick Supreme Soul/Atma[2] called Parmeshwar (literally meaning the supreme Lord)[3]. I am the entity called the all-pervading, omnipresent and immanent Atma[4] that is famous in all the Vedas and which is endowed with all-round virtues (such as being omniscient, all-knowing, well versed in everything and every knowledge)[5]. I am the face of and the mouth for the whole creation and the creatures that inhabit it[6] (47).

[1]हम ऽव्यक्तो, [2]आत्मा मायावी, [3]परमेश्वरः, [4]सर्वात्मा, [5]कीर्तितः सर्ववेदेषु, [6]सर्वतोमुखः

[Note :- The last word Sarwatomukh 'सर्वतोमुखः' also literally means that 'I am the mouth of all', or 'I reside in the mouth of all', or 'I am the face of all the creatures'. It means, that the Atma lives in all the creatures which are born, which eat and speak, which have a body and a physical form.]

सर्वकामः सर्वरसः सर्वगन्धोऽजरोमरः ।
सर्वतः पाणिपादोऽहमन्तर्यामी सनातनः ।।४८।।

I (the Atma) am an embodiment of all contentedness and fulfillments (i.e., I am fully satisfied and have no desires left in me; I don't want anything because I lack nothing)[1]. I represent the sap or juice or essence having all the flavour or extract of every known virtue that exist[2]. Similarly, all the 'smells' (i.e., the various characteristics, virtues and qualities emanating their specific signature fragrances which identify their special features; the property of suggesting or intimating the presence of special virtues, good or bad) are present in me[3]. I am immune to old age and its attendant degenerative diseases affecting the body; I am also eternal and immortal[4]. I am present everywhere, because I am omnipresent[5]. I have innumerable hands and legs (because the limbs of all the creatures are but my limbs)[6]. I reside inside all the creatures and know about their inner thoughts and feelings[7]. I am truthful, universal and eternal[8] (48).

[1]सर्वकामः, [2]सर्वरसः, [3]सर्वगन्धो, [4]ऽजरोमरः, [5]सर्वतः, [6]पाणिपादो, [7]ऽहमन्तर्यामी, [8]सनातनः

अपाणिपादो जवनो गृहीतो हृदि संस्थितः ।
अचक्षुरपि पश्यामि तथाऽकर्णः शृणोम्यहम् ।।४९।।

I (the Atma) do not have any gross, physical hand or leg[1], yet I am active, swift and agile[2]. I accept everything[3] and live in the heart of the creature[4]. I see without having a gross, physical eye[5]; I hear without having a gross, physical ear[6] (49).

[1]अपाणिपादो, [2]जवनो, [3]गृहीतो, [4]हृदि संस्थितः, [5]अचक्षुरपि पश्यामि, [6]ऽकर्णः शृणोम्यहम्

वेदाहं सर्वमेवेदं न मां जानाति कश्चन ।
प्राहुर्महान्तं पुरुषं मामेकं तत्त्वदर्शिनः ।।५०।।

I (the Atma) know everyone and everything (because I am omniscient and all-knowing, omnipresent and immanent)[1] but none of them know and understands me[2]. Those who are expert in the fundamentals of the supreme, subtle and truthful knowledge about the absolute reality[3] know that I am only 'one'[4], and they recognise me as the supreme, glorious, majestic Purush (or the great, eclectic, supreme Lord of the creation)[5] (50).

[1]वेदाहं सर्वमेवेदं, [2]न मां जानाति कश्चन, [3]तत्त्वदर्शिनः, [4]मामेकं, [5]प्राहुर्महान्तं पुरुषं

निर्गुणामलरूपस्य य तदेश्वर्यमुत्तमम् ।
यन्न देवा विजानन्ति मोहिता मायया मम् ।।५१।।

My excellent, supreme, divine, glorious, majestic and stupendous form[1] that is subtle, without any attributes, pristine pure, untainted, uncorrupted, faultless and flawless[2] is not even known to the divine celestial Gods[3] because they are under the spell of my magical wand which has created a veil of ignorance and delusion around them[4] (preventing them to realise and see the truth) (51).

[1]ऐश्वर्यमुत्तमम् रूपस्य, [2]निर्गुणा ऽमल, [3]यन्न देवा विजानन्ति, [4]मोहिता मायया मम्

यन्मे गुह्यतमं देहं सर्वगं तत्त्वदर्शिनः ।
प्रविष्ठा मम सायुज्यं लभन्ते योगिनोऽव्ययम् ।।५२।।

The most esoteric, atomic, subtle, strange and secret body of mine[1], which is all-pervading, omnipresent and all encompassing[2], is accessible to only the wise ones who are aware of the fundamentals of the supreme, subtle and truthful knowledge about the absolute reality known as Atma or Brahma[3]. This knowledge empowers them to merge themselves in me (to remove the false sense of duality, of segregation and separation from me, and having an independent

identity or existence that is different from me)[4]. Consequentially, they become one with me[5]. That is, such Yogis (ascetics) become imperishable, eternal and infinite like me (because they have dissolved their independent identities with me, and I posses these qualities)[6] (52).

[1]गुह्यतमं देहं, [2]सर्वगं, [3]यन्मे तत्त्वदर्शिनः, [4]प्रविष्ठा मम, [5]सायुज्यं लभन्ते, [6]योगिनोऽव्ययम्

[Note :- The overriding condition and the essential qualification for an ascetic to become one with the supreme Lord is marked by one single word 'Tatwadarshan' 'तत्त्वदर्शन'. That is, only those who have a deep, penetrating insight about the essential character of the cosmos, who are well versed in the fundamental basis upon which the whole concept of creation is founded, who realise and understand the concepts, inter alia, of the Atma, Brahm, creature, body, world and the other aspects of Sankhya philosophy —only such wise, erudite, sagacious, learned, scholarly and enlightened persons would be able to find oneness with the eclectic, truthful, transcendental and supreme entity which is the ultimate Truth and Reality of creation (i.e., Brahm). This is possible because they understand the fundamental principle that their true identity is the Atma and not the gross, physical body, and that this Atma is a fraction or a reflection of the supreme Atma of the cosmos, known as Brahm.]

येषां हि न समापन्ना माया वै विश्वरूपिणी ।
लभन्त परमं शुद्धं निर्वाणं ते मया सह ।।५३।।

He who is not shackled by, or allows himself to be mired or engrossed in my Maya (powers to create delusion and illusions ignited by ignorance)[1] which has a global, cosmic and universal presence everywhere and which is colossus, massive, hefty formidable, majestic and stupendous in its power, reach and size[2] —only such a person is able to obtain the final and complete deliverance and emancipation[3] along with me (i.e., the Atma)[4]. [That is, when I, the Atma, merge my self with my primary source, the Brahm, as mentioned in verse no. 39 and 52 above, such wise persons also attain the same fate as me. That is, my devotees follow the example set by me] (53).

[1]समापन्ना माया, [2]विश्वरूपिणी, [3]परमं शुद्धं निर्वाणं, [4]ते मया सह

न तेषां पुनरावृत्तिः कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ।
प्रसादान्मम ते वत्स एतद्वेदानुशासनम् ।।५४।।

Such persons do not have to come back and take birth again in this world[1] even in numerous eras, or literally millions of years[2]. Oh son (Hanuman)! It does happen only by my grace[3]. This is the proclamation and an inviolable maxim pronounced by the Veda[4] (54).

[1]न तेषां पुनरावृत्तिः, [2]कल्पकोटिशतैरपि, [3]प्रसादान्मम, [4]एतद्वेदानुशासनम्

नापुत्रशिष्ययोगिभ्यो दातव्यं हनूमन्क्वचित् ।
यदुक्तमेतद्विज्ञानं सांख्ययोगसमाश्रयम् ।।५५।।

Oh Hanuman! This supreme knowledge of the science of Sankhya Yoga[1] (see verse no. 52 and its note) that I have divulged to you or preached you about or have described to you[2] in detail should not at all be given or preached to or divulged before[3] unworthy and incompetent persons, whether they be a son, a disciple or a Yogi (ascetic or hermit, sage or seer)[4] who do not have the requisite aptitude for it' (55).

[1]विज्ञानं सांख्ययोग, [2]यदुक्तमेतद्वि, [3]ना दातव्यं क्वचित्, [4]पुत्रशिष्ययोगिभ्यो

[Note :- We must not that the profound philosophy of Sankhya Yoga is the essence of the Vedantic philosophy about Brahm, Atma and creature. Sri Ram is a manifestation of the supreme Brahm. So, what we hear in this Canto no. 11 is in effect the supreme Lord speaking himself. It is significant that the pronoun 'I' has been repeatedly used in this Canto —from verse no. 47 right up to verse no. 54. Though it refers to the Atma of the creature, but since the speaker here is Sri Ram as a manifestation of Brahm, we deduce that the supreme authority of the creation is advising this himself. Therefore, the pronoun 'I' is a metaphor for Brahm speaking in the form of Sri Ram. The importance and significance of Sankhya school of philosophy is established by this fact —that it has been pronounced, enunciated and expounded by Brahm himself, and he has chosen it upon the other 5 schools of philosophy to preach Hanuman who is the wisest amongst the wise. This certainly shows that Brahm must have deemed the Sankhya

philosophy as being superior to other schools of philosophy.]

Thus ends Canto 11 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the principal tenets of Sankhya Yoga.

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Canto 12

Sri Ram continues with his metaphysical and spiritual preaching —highlighting the philosophy of the Upanishad in this Canto

This Canto supplements Sri Ram's discourse to Hanuman in the previous Canto no. 11. These two Cantos, no. 11 and 12, by themselves ingeniously enumerate and elucidate the basic tenets of the Upanishadic philosophy dealing with such entities as the Atma and Brahm, the Viraat Purush and Prakriti, their special characteristics and relationships, the origin of creation and its dissolution, the concept of Ahankar and Kaal, besides establishing the fact that Sri Ram himself is the Supreme Lord of creation. He is no ordinary prince or king. It also shows that Sri Ram is highly erudite, wise, learned, scholarly and enlightened about the profoundest of metaphysical and spiritual concepts and he is well versed in the philosophy of Vedanta.

पुन: राम: प्रवचनमुवाच द्विजपुङ्गव: ।
अव्यक्तादभवत्काल: प्रधानं पुरुष: पर: ।।१।।

Sri Ram said once again, or he continues with his discourse to Hanuman[1], 'Oh exalted Brahmin (Hanuman in the disguise of a Brahmachari)[2]! From the 'Abyakta' (literally meaning the one who cannot be described and defined, who is invisible and imperceptible, who has no attribute and cannot be comprehended; here referring to the supreme, transcendental, sublime and unmanifested Brahm)[3] energised the 'Kaal' (meaning death; the factors of time, circumstance and eventuality)[4]. [See also verse no. 9.] From the latter came into being the supreme, transcendental macrocosmic

'Purush' (the Male aspect of creation; the first manifestation of Brahm. The supreme Being)[5] (1).

[1]पुन: राम: प्रवचनमुवाच, [2]द्विजपुङ्गव:, [3]अव्यक्ता, [4]काल:, [5]प्रधानं पुरुष: पर:

[Note :- (i) The first word 'पुन:' links this Canto with the previous one. (ii) Hanuman had approached Sri Ram disguised as a Brahmin Brahmachari (see Canto 10, verse no. 11). So, Sri Ram addresses him as an exalted Brahmin here.]

तेभ्य: सर्वमिदं जातं तस्मात्सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
सर्वत: पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।।२।।

[Verse no. 1-3 describe the macrocosmic form of the supreme Brahm] From him (the supreme Purush) has emerged this whole cosmos or universe[1]. That Purush has his hands and legs[2], his head and mouth[3] present everywhere[4] (2).

[1]सर्वमिदं जातं तस्मात्सर्वमिदं जगत्, [2]पाणिपादं, [3]ऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्, [4]तत्सर्वतो

[Note :- The supreme Purush or Being is also called Viraat Purush in the Upanishads. He is the composite macrocosmic form of all the individual creatures in this world. Hence, the uncountable number of hands, legs, heads and mouths of all these as many uncountable number of creatures of the creation are in effect the organs of that supreme Purush who has revealed himself in as many forms in all these myriad varieties of creatures of this creation, assuming so many forms that they are beyond imagination, each form being a representative of the Viraat Purush.]

सर्वत: श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ।
सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।।३।।

He has his ears in all the directions and he hears everything[1]. He pervades the entire creation and, at the same time, encloses it or envelops it from all the sides[2]. Though he has no physical gross organs of perception and action as we understand them[3], he possesses all the virtues of these organs so much so that he appears to actually posses them[4] (3).

[1]सर्वत: श्रुतिमल्लोके, [2]सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति, [3]सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम्, [4]सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं,

सर्वाधारं स्थिरानन्दमव्यक्तं द्वैतवर्जितम् ।
सर्वोपमानरहितं प्रमाणातीतगोचरम् ।।४।।

[The following verses enumerate the different virtues, qualities or

characteristics that define Brahm.]

It is the basis and foundation of all that exists (Sarwadhar)[1]; it is eternally and unwaveringly blissful and perpetually full of beatitude and felicity (Sthir Anand)[2]; it is invisible, indefinable, beyond the purview of speech and comprehension and is attributeless (Abyakta— see also verse no. 1)[3]; it is the opposite of duality (i.e., it is a non-dual entity called Advaitya)[4]; it is free of all epithets, honours, adjectives and descriptions as well as from all comparisons and similes (Upama Rahit)[5]; it is beyond proof and the requirements of veracity and test (i.e., it does not need a test or proof to establish the veracity of its truthfulness or its existence or its stupendous powers and glories or its majesty and splendour or its authority)[6]; it is invisible for a creature's gross eyes (but it can be perceived by the subtle eyes of wisdom i.e., it is Agochar)[7] (4).

[1]सर्वाधारं, [2]स्थिरानन्द, [3]ऽव्यक्तं, [4]द्वैतवर्जितम्, [5]सर्वोपमानरहितं, [6]प्रमाणातीत, [7]ऽगोचरम्

निर्विकल्पं निराभासं सर्वाभासं परामृतम् ।
अभिन्नं भिन्नसंस्थानं शाश्वतं ध्रुवमव्ययम् ।।५।।

It is without a second, without an alternative and without a parallel (Nirvikalp)[1]. It is beyond perception and conception, imagination and vision (Nirabhas)[2]; but is perceived, viewed, conceived and imagined to be present everywhere (Sarvabhas)[3] at the same time. [That is, though Brahm can't be seen like we see any ordinary physical entity in this world, but we can subtly feel and view his presence everywhere, in all that exists around us simply because Brahm is present everywhere in so many divergent forms and he is omnipresent in every nook and corner of the creation.] It is the supreme elixir called Amrit (and ambrosia which gives eternal eternity, beatitude and felicity to a creature—i.e., it is Parmamrit)[4]. It is unique in the sense that it is separate, de-linked and detached from everything else (Bhinna)[5], but at the same time it is present uniformally and universally in all that exist as its integral and inseparable part (Abhinna)[6]. It is universal, eternal and infinite (Shaswat)[7]. It is steady, unwavering, unmoving and undisputable (Dhruv)[8]. It is imperishable and not subject to ruin, decay, destruction and annihilation of any kind (Avyayam)[9] (5).

[1]निर्विकल्पं, [2]निराभासं, [3]सर्वाभासं, [4]परामृतम्, [5]भिन्न, [6]अभिन्नं संस्थानं, [7]शाश्वतं, [8]ध्रुव, [9]ऽव्ययम्

निर्गुणं परमं व्योम तज्ज्ञानं सूरयो विदुः ।
स आत्मा सर्वभूतानां स बाह्याभ्यन्तरात्परः ।।६।।

It is without any attributes and any quality or virtue called Gunas (Nirgun)[1]; it is supreme and most exalted (Param)[2]; it is (vast, fathomless, measureless, spotless, colourless and faultless) like the sky or space (Vyom)[3]. It shines like the Sun in the sky. Those who are expert, wise, erudite, learned, scholarly, sagacious and enlightened[4] define the knowledge which pertains to it (the Brahm)[5] as having the radiance, glory and splendour as that possessed by the Sun in the sky[6]. It is present as the Atma/soul of all the creatures known as Bhuts[7]. It is present inside as well as outside everything[8]. It is supreme, transcendental, eclectic, sublime, subtle and beyond the reach of anything[9] (6).

[1]निर्गुणं, [2]परमं, [3]व्योम, [3]विदुः, [5]तज्ज्ञानं, [6]सूरयो, [7]स आत्मा सर्वभूतानां, [8]स बाह्याभ्यन्तर, [9]तरात्परः

सोऽहं सर्वत्रगः शान्तो ज्ञानात्मा परमेश्वरः ।
मया ततमिदं विश्वं जगदव्यक्तरूपिणा ।।७।।

That (supreme entity described in the foregoing verses) is 'me' (Sri Ram as a manifestation of Brahm)[1]. [The other characteristics or virtues that Brahm possesses are the following—] I (as Brahm) can go wherever I please (i.e., I am all-pervading, immanent and omnipresent)[2]. I am calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil (Shanto)[3]. My Atma is an embodiment of Gyan (truthful knowledge, erudition and wisdom), i.e., I am called a 'Gyan Atma'[4]. I am indeed that Supreme Being who is the Lord of all the Gods, called Parmeshwar[5]. It is me who is primarily invisible, subtle and unmanifested[6] but who has created and revealed this world having endless dimensions[7] (7).

[1]सोऽहं, [2]सर्वत्रगः, [3]शान्तो, [4]ज्ञानात्मा, [5]परमेश्वरः, [6]मया ततमिदं, [7]विश्वं जगदव्यक्तरूपिणा

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ।
प्रधानं पुरुषं चैव तत्त्वद्वयमुदाहृतम् ।।८।।

All the mortal creatures called Bhuts[1] are present in their primary and subtle forms in me[2] —anyone who knows and comprehends this basic and fundamental fact[3] is said to know the teachings of the Vedas[4]. There are said to be two essential aspects of creation[5] —the first is the chief, primary and supreme authority (Brahm)[6], and the second is the

Purush(the supreme Being; the Viraat Purush)[7] (8).

[1]सर्वभूतानि, [2]मत्स्थानि, [3]यस्तं वेद, [4]वेदवित्, [5]तत्त्वद्वयमुदाहृतम्, [6]प्रधानं, [7]पुरुषं

[Note :- (i) The creatures of the world have originated from 5 basic elements created by Brahma, the creator, at the time of creation. These are earth, water, fire, wind and space in increasing order of subtlety. The creatures are a result of the various permutation and combination in which these elements joined together to create the cosmos. The word 'Bhut' is very significant because it literally means 'a ghost or a phantom'. It also means 'something that is past and not real'. Hence, everything that is produced from these 5 elements is 'ghost like', it is illusionary, faulty and deceptive. Also, what appears to be true now becomes something of the past in the next moment.

(ii) Vedanta philosophy states that the ultimate emancipation of a creature means that the Atma of the creature merges with the supreme Atma or soul of the cosmos when the boundary wall or sac covering consisting of this body which separates the Atma present inside the creature from the Atma of the cosmos outside it is removed. This happens at the time of death when the Pran or the vital life-infusing wind force present inside the body makes its exit and merges or coalesces with the wind present outside the body. In a similar way, the space present inside the body merges or coalesces with the space outside the body once the boundary wall-like body is removed from between them. As a result, the 5 elements that constitute the composite body of the creature disintegrate into their primary forms and merge with the elements of the cosmos.

(iii) At the time of creation, the attributeless Brahm first created the Viraat Purush or its macrocosmic manifestation which had certain attributes. All the attributes that are ascribed to Brahm are intended for that Purush, simply because Brahm is attributeless. The entire cosmos was actually created by that subtle Brahm, but it had done so after first assuming the form of Viraat Purush, who was gross at the macro level just like the individual creature is

gross at the micro level and its Atma is subtle at this level. The Purush is also known as Vishnu in the Purans, and this Vishnu has manifested as Sri Ram. The Brahm entered that invisible Viraat Purush as his Atma or soul, just like it entered the creature as its Atma or soul.]

तयोरनादिर्निष्टिः कालः संयोजकः परः ।
त्रयमेतदनाद्यन्तमव्यक्तं समवस्थितम् ।।९।।

The designated entity that enables the union between them (the creature, the Purush and the Brahm)[1] is the great authority known as 'Kaal'[2]. In fact all these three (the Kaal, the creature and the Purush)[3] have their basis in that eternal, infinite, invisible, indefinable, sublime, subtle and incomprehensible entity known as 'Abyakta' (i.e., Brahm; see also verse nos. 1 and 4 in this context)[4] (9).

[1]तयोरनादिर्निष्टिः संयोजकः, [2]कालः परः, [3]त्रयमेत, [4]ऽद्यन्तमव्यक्तं समवस्थितम्

[Note :- The word 'Kaal' 'काल' broadly refers to death or the appropriate and designated time when the duration of life of anything comes to an end. Obviously, a creature can merge his individual Atma/soul with the supreme Atma/soul only after death when it leaves his body. Similarly, when the time comes, the entire cosmos, at the macro level represented by the Viraat Purush, would also dissolve into the supreme Brahm. See verse no. 16, 23 and 24 for further elaboration on the concept of Kaal, and also note to verse no. 8 above. Kaal also means destiny. When things happen beyond control, we usually say 'it is due to Kaal', or 'it is due to destiny'.]

तदात्मकं तदन्यत्स्यात्तद्रूपं मामकं विदुः ।
महदाद्यं विशेषान्तं सम्प्रसूतेऽखलिं जगत् ।।१०।।

By extension[1], you (Hanuman) must treat whatever you see as my, i.e., Sri Ram's or Viraat Purush's extended form[2]. You must be enlightened about this fact[3]. It is 'me' who has created this entire world[4], right from the supreme Majesty (i.e., the Purush)[5] to the individual creature[1] (10).

[1]तदात्मकं, [2]तदन्यत्स्यात्तद्रूपं मामकं, [3]विदुः, [4]सम्प्रसूतेऽखलिं जगत्, [5]महदाद्यं, [6]विशेषान्तं

या सा प्रकृतिरुद्दिष्टा मोहिनी सर्व देहिनाम् ।
पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थितोऽपिभुंक्ते यः प्रकृतान्गुणान् ।।११।।

This 'Prakriti' (Nature and its accompanying delusion)[1] is said to

delude every creature having a body or form into having misconceptions about the absolute Truth and Reality of this creation[2]. The Purush (both the macrocosmic Viraat as well as the individual male creature) is present in the midst of this Prakriti (Mother Nature)[3]. So he cannot be immune to its influence. He is affected by and suffers from[4] the qualities which are an inherent and innate part of Prakriti as its intrinsic and unavoidable aspect[5] (11).

[1]प्रकृति, [2]मोहिनी सर्व देहिनाम्, [3]पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थितो, [4]ऽपिभुंक्ते यः प्रकृतान्गुणान्

[Note :- The word Prakriti 'प्रकृति' has the following connotations — (a) Mother Nature and (b) the natural habits, temperaments and inclinations of a person. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood. Prakriti has also been mentioned in Canto 11, verse no. 17 in the context of Brahm being beyond its purview.]

अहङ्कारो विविक्तत्वात्प्रोच्यते पञ्चविशकः ।
आद्यो विकारः प्रकृतिर्महनात्मेति कथ्यते ।।१२।।

When he gets mired with 'Ahankar' (ego, self pride, arrogance, haughtiness) or, in other words, when he starts discriminating between the various elements and manifestations of the same supreme Brahm and thinks that he has the powers to create all of them, sustain them and annihilate or destroy them, that he is wise and most enlightened in the creation, that he understands the meaning of Brahm, Prakriti etc., and has such other egoist emotions and conceptions, he becomes full of pride and haughtiness[1]. It is said that he (the Purush) possesses 25 elements[2]. The various faults,

flaws and shortcomings of the creature, which have been present in it from the very beginning[3], are called its 'Prakriti' or its innate nature, its natural temperaments, its basic habits and its fundamental tendencies, habits and inclinations[4]. These are like a drag on its Atma, and therefore they have a negative influence on the greatness of its Atma. Hence, those faults, flaws and shortcomings (such as delusions and ignorance about the Truth) that are present in this creation from the very beginning are dissolved in Prakriti and its counterpart the Purush as their integral part and form their characteristics. That is why they are called the great 'non-Atma' factors[5] (12).

[1]अहङ्कारो विविक्त, [2]त्वात्प्रोच्यते पञ्चविशकः, [3]आद्यो विकारः, [4]प्रकृति, [5]र्महनात्मेति कथ्यते

[Note-(i) Since the visible creation is a manifested form of the invisible forces of Nature; all the characteristics present in the latter would be present in the former. For example, suppose we have red-coloured water. When this water solidifies as ice, the latter will also appear to be red. (ii) The 25 elements (पञ्चविशकः) are the following-5 Organs of perception (ear, nose, tongue, eye, skin) + 5 Organs of action (hand, leg, mouth, genitals, excretory) + 1 Mana (mind) + 1 Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) + 1 Pran (the vital life-giving breath) + 1 Atma (soul) + 1 Buddhi (intelligence) + 5 Perceptions (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch) + 5 Bhuts (earth, water, fire, air, space)=25 elements. These have been enumerated in Mahopanishad, 1/4 – 69 of Sam Veda tradition]

विज्ञानशक्तिर्विज्ञानादहङ्कारस्तदुत्थित ।
एक एव महानात्मा सोहङ्कारोऽभिधीयते ।।१३।।

How is Ahankar produced? Sri Ram explains this to Hanuman here. 'Vigyan' (logical, systematic, empirical and rational knowledge)[1] empowers a person with all the benefits and powers that accrue with such truthful knowledge[2]. [That is, he acquires expertise, special skills and art of implementing his newly acquired knowledge; he develops maturity, erudition, scholarship and awareness about the facts which are not known to others; this infuses wisdom and sagacity in him and he gets fame, honour, acclaim and respect from others

as being a learned man possessing special skills and knowledge. People seek his advice and refer to him.] But the unfortunate part is that this leads to the sprouting of 'Ahankar' (ego, self praise, self pride, arrogance, haughtiness and hypocrisy) in him[3]. [That is, honour and praise makes a man puffed up with Ahankar instead of making him humble and submissive.] The supreme Soul is only one[4]. So, when it is over shadowed with these faults as described in previous verses, it gets tainted with Ahankar[5]. [That is, though the supreme Soul, or Brahm, is pure, immaculate and without any blemish, but once it assumes the form of a Viraat Purush, it thinks that it has such immense potential as displayed by the Viraat Purush in the form of his stupendous powers to create this colourful and myriad variety of creation. Immediately, it (the supreme Soul or Brahm) gets surrounded by a veil or a cloak of Ahankar. Being shrouded with this tainted character, it begins to be known as 'Ahankar', because this Ahankar shrouds it from all the sides and hides its true, immaculate and uncorrupt form as the supreme Soul of the cosmos which is pristine pure, without any trace of 'Ahankar', and is unadulterated and pure.] (13)

[1]विज्ञाना, [2]विज्ञान शक्ति, [3]हङ्कारस्त, [4]महानात्मा, [5]सोहङ्कारोऽभिधीयते

[Note :- To illustrate how a veil of 'Ahankar' makes the otherwise flawless, faultless, immaculate and supreme Soul become identified with this adjective used to define it, let us take the example of any professional. Suppose a man is an expert doctor or a lawyer. No one knows he is a doctor or a lawyer in an alien place or even at his work place in a hospital or a court if he does not don the requisite paraphernalia, e.g., a stethoscope around his neck and a doctor's white robe on his body as a doctor, or a black robe as a lawyer. When he does so, then immediately the people start calling him as a doctor or a lawyer. Now, if he is wise, he will go about his duties in a professional way, but stupid people will become haughty and arrogant, throwing their weight around to impress and influence others for personal gain though in their specific fields or vocations they may not be up to the required professional mark.]

स जीवः सोऽतरात्मेति गीयते तत्त्व चिन्तकैः ।
तेन वेदयते सर्वं सुखं दुःखं च जन्मसु ।।१४।।

The 'Jiva' (the living entity)[1] is the Atma present in the bosom of the creature[2] —this is what wise and scholarly persons who are expert and matured in the truthful knowledge about the basis of creation affirm[3]. When one comes to know of it[4], he learns about the real meaning of 'Sukh and Dukh' (i.e., happiness and joy as well as sorrows and torments) of the various births[5] (14).

[1]स जीवः, [2]सोऽतरात्मेति, [3]तत्त्व चिन्तकैः, [4]तेन वेदयते, [5]सर्वं सुखं दुःखं च जन्मसु

[Note :- A wise person realises that he has been suffering only because of the fact that he has not realised the truth about the basically and inherently calm and peaceful, eternal and imperishable nature of the Atma that is merely a witness to all that is happening around it in this world, that it neither takes birth nor dies because it is eternal, and it simply leaves one body to enter another.]

स विज्ञानत्मकस्तस्य मनःस्यादुपकारकम् ।
तेनाविवेकतस्तस्मात् संसार पुरुषस्य तु ।।१५।।

That Atma is the entity that has a truthful, rational, empirical and logical existence and is the subject matter of all metaphysical knowledge, scholarship and erudition. At the same time, the Atma is the embodiment of all rational thoughts and empirical knowledge[1]. The 'Mana' (mind and heart) is obliged and indebted to it[2] (because this Atma gives it correct and enlightened guidance, it shows it the truthful path as a benevolent and kind master and Lord). It is the ignorance about its existence[3] that the Purush[4] (here meaning an individual creature), through his 'Mana', imagines erroneously that this world exists[5]. [That is, only because the creature forgets or is ignorant about the existence of the only truthful entity called the Atma, that it thinks that what its sees or observes as the world outside has an actual existence. But this perception about the world is fallacious because there cannot be two truths at the same time; one of them has to be a non-truth, or an imposter. In the present context, the Atma is the truthful entity while the world is the imposter.] (15)

[1]स विज्ञानत्मक, [2]मनःस्यादुपकारकम्, [3]तेनाविवेकतस्त, [4]पुरुषस्य, [5]स्मात् संसार

स चाविवेकः प्रकृतौ सङ्गात्कालेन सोऽभवत् ।
कालः सृजति भूतानि कालः संहरते प्रजाः ।।१६।।

[Verse nos. 16 and 17 highlight the importance of 'Kaal'.]

The ignorance or lack of wisdom[1] is created or is sparked by the contact which the Prakriti (see verse no. 11) has with 'Kaal' (see verse nos. 9, 23-24 also)[2]. [That is, 'Kaal', as fate, has joined hands with the forces of nature or 'Prakriti' to create ignorance, lack of wisdom and delusion, collectively called 'Avivek', in a creature. This is because if there was no ignorance about the Atma, there would be complete peace on earth as then all the creatures would treat all others like they would treat themselves, and there would be no cause for hatred, animosity, jealousy and ill will; there would be no wars and strife if everyone was contented and satisfied with whatever he has; there would be no evil mongering and perversions of any kind.] It is the 'Kaal' (here meaning circumstance, time and coincidences) that create everything that exist[3], and it is the 'Kaal' (here meaning death, fate, destiny) that annihilates (kills, destroys, ruins and brings to an end) all the beings in this creation[4] (16).

[1]स चाविवेकः प्रकृतौ, [2]सङ्गात्कालेन सोऽभवत्, [3]कालः सृजति भूतानि, [4]कालः संहरते प्रजाः

सर्वे कालस्य वशगा न कालः कस्यचिद्वशे ।
सोऽन्तरा सर्वमेवेदं नियच्छति सनातनः ।।१७।।

Everything and everybody is subservient to and a subordinate of 'Kaal'; they are all subject to the kind grace of 'Kaal'[1]. The latter is not subordinate to anyone[2].

That truthful, universal and eternal entity (Brahm)[3] is present in the bosom of all the beings (as their Atma)[4], and it regulates, controls, gives leadership and exercises authority over all that exist[5] (17).

[1]सर्वे कालस्य वशगा, [2]न कालः कस्यचिद्वशे, [3]सनातनः, [4]सोऽन्तरा, [5]सर्वमेवेदं नियच्छति

प्रोच्यते भगवान्प्राणः सर्वज्ञः पुरुषः परः ।
सर्वन्द्रियेभ्यः परमं मनः प्रहुर्मनीषिणः ।।१८।।

It is the Atma that is known as 'Bhagvan'[1], 'Pran'[2], 'Sarwagya' (omniscient, all knowing and wise)[3], and the 'supreme Purush'[4]. Those who are expert, learned and scholarly[5] call the 'Mana' (mind)[6] as an organ that is separate from and independent of all other organs of the body[7], and is the most exalted and superior to all of them[8] (18).

भगवान, प्राणः, सर्वज्ञः, पुरुषः परः, प्रहुर्मनीषिणः, मनः, सर्वन्द्रियेभ्यः, परमं

[Note :- (i) The word 'Bhagwan' 'भगवान' loosely means the supreme God. It has 2 components —Bhag+wan. The 'Wan' component means 'one who possesses or rides upon', such as a person who rides a rickshaw is called a 'Rickshaw-Wan' (रिक्शावान), a lucky man is called 'Bhagya-Wan' (भाग्यवान), a wealthy man is called 'Dhan-Wan' (धनवान). The main component of the word 'Bhagwan' is 'Bhag' —it means to have the following virtues— (a) Aishwarya (ऐश्वर्य), meaning majesty, pomp, pageantry, flourish, grandeur, glory, supremacy, greatness, omnipotence, power, dominance and sway; (b) Dharma (धर्म), meaning the virtues of righteousness, nobility of thought and conduct, probity and propriety and auspiciousness; (c) Yash (यश), meaning good fame and name, renown and honour; (d) Sri (श्री), meaning wealth, prosperity, wellbeing; (e) Gyan (ज्ञान), meaning knowledge, wisdom, erudition, scholarship, enlightenment, expertise, skill and sagacity; (f) Vairagya (वैराज्ञय), meaning renunciation, dispassion and detachment from this mundane and artificial world and its objects. Therefore, Bhagwan is a person who possesses all these qualities, or these qualities are subservient to him, he controls them and is their Lord.

(ii) The word 'Pran' generally means 'life or breath'. But in Vedanta there are 5 types of Pran; these are the vital winds that sustain life in the creature as well as the creation. These are the following— (a) Pran (प्राण), meaning the vital breath which infuses and sustains life in the body of a creature; (b) Apaan (अपान), meaning the wind which moves down the alimentary canal; it is responsible for ingestion of food and its passage down the intestine till it is excreted; (c) Samaan (समान), meaning the wind that help in circulation of blood and nutrition derived from food consumed by the creature uniformally throughout the body; it helps in distribution of blood and nutrition in the body; (d) Vyan (व्यान), meaning the wind that controls the activity of all other winds; and (e) Udan (उड़ान) meaning the wind which passes upwards—such as during coughing, exhalation, belching. This is the wind which helps the subtle, sublime energy trapped in

the coiled energy centre called Kundalini to rise up along the spine and help the Yogi/ascetic in his meditation exercise to acquire stupendous powers. This wind also helps in speaking.

(iii) There are said to be 11 organs in a creature's body. They have been described in Canto 11, verse no. 42 and its note no. (i). There are 5 organs of perception (ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin), 5 organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, anus and genitals) and 1 organ called the 'Mana' (mind and heart; thoughts and emotions). All the stimuli or information gathered by the organs of perception are passed on to the mind which not only sieves through them and stores them, but also directs the organs of action to respond to them accordingly. When the mind needs guidance, it consults its boss, the intellect. This intellect works as a Personal Assistant to the Supreme Authority, the Atma, which guides and gives leadership to the intellect. The Atma interacts with the outside world through these levels of hierarchy —the Atma-intellect-mind-organ of action or organ of perception. The 'Mana' (mind, intellect and heart) has a separate identity than the other organs. Whereas the latter are collectively called 'the gross body of the creature', the 'Mana' is called 'the subtle body'. The Atma resides in the 'causal body' surrounded by the layers of various Vasanas and Vrittis which are the different passions and tendencies inherently present in a creature respectively and cover it like a veil.

The Atma consults both the intellect as well as the heart to make a decision. When it consults the intellect, it gets empirical and clinical advice based on rational thinking and logic, whereas the advice that it gets from the heart is more sentimental and emotional in nature. Therefore, the actions of the Atma under the influence of the intellect are more intelligent and well thought of in nature as compared to those under the influence of the heart when they tend to become more emotional than logical and rational.]

मनसश्चाप्यहङ्कारमहङ्कारान्महान् पर: ।
महत: परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात्पुरुष: पर: ।।१९।।

Beyond or superior to the 'Mana' (heart and mind) is 'Ahankar'

(ego, arrogance, haughtiness and pride)[1]. Beyond or superior to Ahankar is 'Mahaan' (great, magnificent and macrocosmic but manifested)[2]. Beyond or superior to 'Mahaan' is 'Abyakta' (that which is not manifest)[3]. And beyond or superior to 'Abyakta' is the 'Purush' (the male aspect of creation; the Viraat Purush or Vishnu; the supreme Being)[4]. [That is, Mana is junior to Ahankar, Ahankar is junior to Mahaan, Mahaan is junior to Abyakta and Abyakta is junior to Purush.] (19)

[1]मनसश्चाप्यहङ्कार, [2]महङ्कारान्महान् पर:, [3]महत: परमव्यक्त, [4]मव्यक्तात्पुरुष: पर:

पुरुषाद्भगवान्प्राणस्तस्य सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
प्राणात्परतरं व्योम व्योमातीतोऽग्निरीश्वर: ।।२०।।

Beyond or superior to Purush is the Lord called 'Pran' (the vital life sustaining wind force)[1]. The whole world is under the control of Pran[2]. Beyond or superior to Pran is 'Vyom' (sky or space)[3], and beyond or superior to Vyom is 'Ishwar' (the supreme Lord) in the form of the fire element called 'Agni'[4] (20).

[1]पुरुषाद्भगवान्प्राण, [2]स्तस्य सर्वमिदं जगत्, [3]प्राणात्परतरं व्योम, [4]व्योमातीतोऽग्निरीश्वर:

सोऽहं सर्वत्रग: शान्तो ज्ञानात्मा परमेश्वर: ।
नास्ति मत्परमं भूतं मां विज्ञान विमुच्यते ।।२१।।

I (Sri Ram) am that[1] all-pervading, omnipresent, immanent and all-encompassing[2] supreme Lord known as Ishwar[3] who is none else but the calm, tranquil, peaceful and blissful Atma[4] which is an embodiment of enlightenment, wisdom and erudition[5]. [That is, I am that supreme Lord who is omnipresent and immanent in the cosmos, calm and peaceful like the Atma which is the only enlightened and wise entity in the creation.] There is nothing beyond or superior to me[6]. A creature gets liberation and deliverance[7] from the fetters that tie it down to this mundane, artificial world by realising me (i.e., my true, essential, primary form which is pristine pure, divine, subtle, sublime, eclectic and transcendental)[8] (21).

[1]सोऽहं, [2]सर्वत्रग:, [3]परमेश्वर:, [4]शान्तो, [5]ज्ञानात्मा, [6]नास्ति मत्परमं, [7]भूतं विमुच्यते, [8]मां विज्ञान

नित्यं हि नास्ति जगति भूतं स्थावरजङ्गमम् ।
ऋते मामेकमव्यक्तं व्योमरूपं महेश्वरम् ।।२२।।

This world consisting of both the movable and immovable[1] mortal creatures known as 'Bhuts' (see note to verse no. 8)[2], is not the

truth[3]. The only entity that does have a truthful existence is 'me'[4] who is the supreme and great Lord called Maheshwar[5], who is without any attributes, is invisible and unmanifest, who cannot be defined and described by the faculty of speech[6], and who is as vast, fathomless, measureless, eternal, immaculate, faultless and spotless as the sky[7] (22).

[1]स्थावरजङ्गमम् जगति, [2]भूतं, [3]नित्यं हि नास्ति, [4]मामेक, [5]महेश्वरम्, [6]ऽव्यक्तं, [7]व्योमरूपं

सोऽहं सृजामि सकलं संहरामि सदा जगत् ।
मायी मायामयो देवः कालेन सह सङ्गतः ।।२३।।

It is always me[1] who creates the whole cosmos[2] and subsequently destroys, concludes or annihilates it[3]. [That is, no one besides me is the creator as well as the annihilator of the entire cosmos. I create as well as conclude it.] I am that supreme, maverick and majestic Lord[4] who does everything in conjunction with or in union with and with the aid of 'Kaal'[5] (23).

[1]सोऽहं सदा, [2]सृजामि सकलं जगत्, [3]संहरामि, [4]मायी मायामयो देवः, [5]कालेन सह सङ्गतः

[Note :- The word 'Kaal' has already been defined in verse nos. 9 and 16 above.]

मत्यन्निधावेष कालः करोति सकलं जगत् ।
नियोजयत्यनन्तात्मा ह्येतद्वेदानुशासनम् ।।२४।।

It is in my presence or under my supervision or my guidance[1] that 'Kaal', representing the favourable and appropriate time and circumstances, helps to create the cosmos or the entire world[2], and directs or orders the eternal, endless and supreme Atma[3] to enter it, or inject itself subtly, imperceptibly, quietly into it[4]. Verily, this is what the Vedas proclaim. This is the maxim of the Vedas[5].

[Note :- (i) Kaal first creates circumstances which are conducive to fostering life. So, first it creates the habitat for that life where it can find a place to live when it makes its final appearance. Then, when the foundation and shelter is ready, Kaal creates the inhabitance of that dwelling, the creature, which would live in that creation. 'What will the creature do without a life?' So Kaal orders the supreme Atma to take up a residence in the heart of the creature. It is like the spark that sets forth the chain of life creating process. When things go out of hand, the

'Kaal' creates circumstances that conclude life.

(ii) Some of the important tenets of 'Advaitya' (non-dual) philosophy, inter alia, as propounded by Shankaracharya are the following— (i) 'Brahm' (the absolute Reality and Truth; the absolute pure consciousness and awareness; the absolute bliss, happiness and tranquility; beatitude and felicity) is the only, irrefutable, immutable, indivisible eternal Reality and Truth. (ii) The 'object' (world) that is seen or observed is a mirage-like illusion, a result of hallucinations caused by ignorance incited by Maya. (iii) 'Maya' (the delusion creating powers of ignorance) is neither true nor false; it simply has no existent par se, because there are certainly no 'two' entities. (iv) 'Ishwar' is Brahm in reference to the Maya (i.e., it is Maya that makes one believe that Brahm has taken the form of Ishwar, or Ishwar and Brahm are not dual. (v) 'Moksha' is liberation obtained through knowledge of Brahm, whereby the individual creature establishes his true identity with it.]

Thus ends Canto 12 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the basic tenets of Upanishad pertaining to the Atma, Brahm, Kaal, Ahankar, Jiva (creature) and the Prakriti (creation).

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Canto 13

Sri Ram highlights the importance of devotion for his divine Self besides enumerating his divine attributes and the fact that he is the one who is praised by the Vedas as the very cause of creation

This Canto is a continuation of the discourse that Sri Ram gave for the benefit of Hanuman in the earlier two Canto nos. 11 and 12. Here, the importance of 'Bhakti', or unconditional allegiance, surrender, faith, devotion, worship and having reverence for Sri Ram as a manifestation of the Supreme Being is highlighted. Sri

Ram emphasises the point that he is not merely an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the creation as has been stressed by the Purans, but he is the manifestation of that Supreme Being, called Brahm, who is the cause of the origin of not only the entire creation but also of Lord Vishnu himself. By corollary then, Sri Ram is superior to Vishnu, and he embodies in himself all the Gods as well as the rest of the creation including the animate as well as the inanimate creatures. This is amply made clear by him in verse nos. 15-32. The importance of worship is stressed in the first half of the Canto in verse no. 1-14.

The Holy Bible also asserts about 'Bhakti' — '*In him we live and move, and have our being*' (Acts, 17/28), '*Trust in him at all times, you people, pour out your heart before him; for God is a refuge for us*' (Psalms, 62/8).

वक्ष्ये समाहितमनाः शृणुष्व पवनात्मज ।
येनेदं लीयते रूपं येनेदं सम्प्रवर्तते ।।१।।
नाहं तपोभिर्विविधैर्न दानेन च चेज्यया ।
शक्यो हि पुरुषैर्ज्ञातुमृते भक्तिमनुत्तमाम् ।।२।।

Sri Ram preached to Hanuman, 'Oh the son of the Wind-God! Listen carefully to what I say. That supreme entity from whom all these various myriad forms of this creation have unfolded themselves and from whom all the numerous forms having so many innumerable shapes, contours and countenance have emerged, that entity is 'me' (1).

I am not pleased by the numerous austerities and penances called Tapa that a man does or the strict religious vow that he keeps[1], nor am I pleased by the numerous charities that he makes or the generous donations or alms that he gives[2], neither am I known or understood by doing different 'Yagyas' (fire sacrifices, religious ceremonies and observing different sacraments)[3]. Only those who have 'Bhakti' or devotion for me, who worship me, adore me and have reverence for me, are able to successfully attain me (2). [1-2]

[1]नाहं तपोभिर्विविधैर्न, [2]दानेन च चेज्यया, [3]शक्यो हि पुरुषैर्ज्ञा, [4]र्ज्ञातुमृते भक्तिमनुत्तमाम्

अहं हि सर्वभावानामन्तस्तिष्ठामि सर्वगः ।
मां सर्वसाक्षिणं लोके न जानन्ति प्लवङ्गम ।।३।।

I am omnipresent and omniscient[1], and am the culmination of all ideas, views, perceptions and conceptions about the existence, soul and birth[2]. Oh the brave and exalted one (Hanuman)[3]! I am that witness to everything[4] who the world is not able to understand and comprehend[5] (3).

[1]सर्वगः, [2]सर्वभावानामन्तस्तिष्ठामि, [3]प्लवङ्गम, [4]मां सर्वसाक्षिणं, [5]लोके न जानन्ति

[Note :- Compare this verse with verse no. 4 of Canto 14.]

यस्यान्तरा सर्वमिदं यो हि सर्वान्तरः परः ।
सोऽहं धाता विधाता च लोकेऽस्मिन्विश्वतोमुखः ।।४।।

He in whose bosom[1] all this that exist is present[2], he who prevails uniformally and universally in all that exist as an integral, inherent and intrinsic part of it all[3], and he who is even beyond all that exist, i.e., he who transcends and goes beyond all that exist[4] —verily, it is 'me'[5]. I am the creator as well as the sustainer and the concluder and the one who determines the destiny of all[6] that exist in this world. I, in effect, am immanent and pervade in this world uniformally and universally[7] (4).

[1]यस्यान्तरा, [2]सर्वमिदं, [3]यो हि सर्वान्तरः, [4]परः, [5]सोऽहं, [6]धाता विधाता, [7]लोकेऽस्मिन्विश्वतोमुखः

न मां पश्यन्ति मुनयः सर्वेऽपि त्रिदिवौकसः ।
ब्राह्मणा मनवः शक्रा ये चान्ये प्रथितौजसः ।।५।।

All Gods including the Trinity Gods (Brahm, Vishnu, Shiva)[1] and the sages, seers, hermits and ascetics[2] are not able to see me (or have a holy view of my divine countenance)[3], and neither are these Brahmins[4], Manu (the first male; here meaning offsprings of Manu, the human race)[5], Indra (the king of Gods)[6] and other exalted Gods[7] competent enough to see or witness me (if they do not fulfill the requirements for my divine vision) (5).

[1]सर्वेऽपि त्रिदिवौकसः, [2]मुनयः, [3]न मां पश्यन्ति, [4]ब्राह्मणा, [5]मनवः, [6]शक्रा, [7]ये चान्ये प्रथितौजसः

[Note :- By eliminating the Trinity and other Gods, sages and seers, Brahmins and other high caste humans from the list of those who can have a divine view of the supreme, transcendental Lord, Sri Ram wishes to emphasise that 'devotion' is an essential requirement and important ingredient to be able to 'see' the Lord, to 'witness' him and 'experience

him'. The 'Lord' referred here, again, is not Lord Vishnu, simply because Vishnu is one of the Trinity Gods who have been shown to be incompetent to see the supreme Lord. Then, who is he? That supreme, transcendental and sublime entity is none other than 'Brahm' who is the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality in creation, and who is adored, admired, honoured, glorified and worshiped by the Vedas and the Upanishads. It is this Brahm who has been described by Sri Ram in the two earlier Canto nos. 11 and 12 also. The Gods and others are only one of the umpteen numbers of manifestations of Brahm.

In brief, Sri Ram emphasises the point that he is a manifestation of that supreme, transcendental and sublime Brahm, and not simply an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Through these 3 Cantos (nos. 11-13), Sri Ram wishes to remove all doubts about his divinity.]

गृणन्ति सततं वेदा मामेकं परमेश्वरम् ।
जयन्ति विविधैरग्नि ब्राह्मणा वैदिकैर्मखैः ।।६।।

All the Vedas constantly, consistently and persistently[1] worship, revere, laud, adore, glorify and honour me[2]. I am the only one divine, supreme, transcendental and sublime Lord and authority in the creation[3]. They say that it is me who is worshipped, honoured, revered, lauded and praised by the Brahmins (priests)[4] when they offer fire sacrifices in different ways[5]. [That is, I am the supreme Lord who is offered the different oblations and libations made during the various fire sacrifices done by Brahmin priests by chanting the hymns of the Vedas and making offerings to the sacrificial fire during religious ceremonies] (6).

[1]सततं वेदा, [2]गृणन्ति, [3]मामेकं परमेश्वरम्, [4]ब्राह्मणा वैदिकैर्मखैः, [5]जयन्ति विविधैरग्नि,

सर्वेलोका नमस्यन्ति ब्रह्मलोके पितामहम् ।
ध्यायन्ति योगिनो देवं भूताधिपतिमीश्वरम् ।।७।।

All the creatures of the world[1] bow reverentially before and pay their obeisance[2] to the honourable and revered patriarch of the creation (i.e., Brahma, the creator) who is none other than me[3] dwelling in the Brahm Loka[4]. Yogis (ascetics)[5] and all the Gods or masters of the creation (such as Gods and worldly kings)[6] worship and honour the

supreme Lord[7] by constantly contemplating and meditation upon him as well as always remembering and invoking him[8] (7).

[1]सर्वेलोका, [2]नमस्यन्ति, [3]पितामहम्, [4]ब्रह्मलोके, [5]योगिनो, [6]देवं भूताधिपति, [7]मीश्वरम्, [8]ध्यायन्ति

अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता चैव फलप्रदः ।
सर्वदेवतनुर्भूत्वा सर्वात्मा सर्व संस्तुतः ।।८।।

I am the one to whom all the religious rituals and fire sacrifices are offered[1]; I am the one who gives the reward for such sacrifices[2]. Since I have manifested myself as the body of all the Gods (or, all the Gods are none other than my own self revealed in different forms)[3], I am that omnipresent, immanent, all-pervading and all-encompassing Atma[4] which is worshipped, adored, admired, glorified, lauded, honoured and revered by all[5] (8).

[1]अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता, [2]चैव फलप्रदः, [3]सर्वदेवतनुर्भूत्वा, [4]सर्वात्मा, [5]सर्व संस्तुतः

मां पश्यन्तीह विद्वान्सो धार्मिका वेदवादिनः ।
तेषां सन्निहितो नित्यं ये भक्ता मामुपासते ।।९।।

Those righteous and virtuous ones[1] who are wise and enlightened as well as experts in the doctrines of the Vedas[2] are able to see and perceive me[3] based on the principles laid down in the Vedas[4]. However, those devotees who worship, honour and adore me[5], I constantly reside near them (though they may not be as learned, erudite and sagacious as their other brethrens who are well versed in the Vedas)[6] (9).

[1]धार्मिका, [2]वेदवादिनः, [3]मां पश्यन्तीह, [4]विद्वान्सो, [5]भक्ता मामुपासते, [6]तेषां सन्निहितो नित्यं

ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्या धार्मिका मामुपासते ।
तेषां ददामि तत्स्थानमानन्दं परमं पदम् ।।१०।।

Those righteous and virtuous Brahmins (the priest class), Kshatriyas (the warrior class) and Vaishyas (the trading class) who worship, honour and adore me, I bestow them or bless them or reward them[1] with the supreme stature known as 'Parampad' (literally meaning the highest state which a creature can aspire to attain)[2]. This state is characterised by supreme beatitude and felicity[3] (10).

[1]तेषां ददामि, [2]परमं पदम्, [3]मानन्दं

अन्येऽपि ये विकर्मस्थाः शूद्राद्या नीच जातयः ।
भक्तिमन्तः प्रमुच्यन्ते कालेन मयि सङ्गताः ।।११।।

Besides them, all other lower classes such as the Shudras[1] who

have been assigned a low rung in the strata of social hierarchy because of their vocations and deeds[2], also attain liberation and deliverance[3] by being close to me[4] by the virtue of their having unwavering devotion for and a sincere allegiance and commitment to me,i.e., by having a wholesome devotion for and allegiance towards me[5] (11).

[1]शूद्राद्या नीच जातयः, [2]विकर्मस्थाः, [3]प्रमुच्यन्ते कालेन, [4]मयि सङ्गताः, [5]भक्तिमन्तः

न मद्भक्ता विनश्यन्ते मद्भक्ता वीतकल्मषाः ।
आदावेतत्प्रतिज्ञातं न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ।।१२।।

My sincere and ardent devotees become free from sins and faults[1], and they do not perish[2]. It has been my promise since the beginning[3] that my devotees do not and will not perish[4] (12).

[1]मद्भक्ता वीतकल्मषाः, [2]न मद्भक्ता विनश्यन्ते, [3]आदावेतत्प्रतिज्ञातं, [4]न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति

यो वा निन्दति तं मूढो देवदेवं स निन्दति ।
यो हि तं पूजयेद्भक्त्या स पूजयति मां सदा ।।१३।।

The stupid and ignorant persons[1] who criticises and prick holes with my devotees[2] is deemed to be criticising and demeaning all the Gods[3]. On the contrary, he who respects, honours, reveres, admires or worships them (my devotees)[4] is deemed to be always paying obeisance and showing respect to me[5] (13).

[1]मूढो, [2]यो वा निन्दति तं, [3]देवदेवं स निन्दति, [4]यो हि तं पूजयेद्भक्त्या, [5]स पूजयति मां सदा

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं मदाराधनकारणात् ।
यो मे ददाति नियतः स मे भक्तः प्रियो मतः ।।१४।।

He who offers leaves of the holy plants (such as Tulsi —the leaves of the Basil plant)[1], flowers[2], fruits[3] and water[4] to me reverentially, with affection and due respect during formal worshipping[5], are known as my devotees[6] and are dear to me[7] (14).

[1]पत्रं, [2]पुष्पं, [3]फलं, [4]तोयं, [5]मदाराधनकारणात्, [6]मे भक्तः, [7]मे भक्तः

अहं हि जगतामादौ ब्रह्माणं परमेष्ठिनम् ।
विधाय दत्तवान्वेदानशेषानास्य निःसृतान् ।।१५।।

At the time of the beginning of creation[1], it is me who creates the 4-headed Brahma (the creator)[2] and give him all the Vedas (representing the composite body of knowledge)[3] which have emerged from my mouth, or which I have pronounced, proclaimed and promulgated myself for the benefit of mankind[4] (15).

[1]अहं हि जगतामादौ, [2]ब्रह्माणं परमेष्ठिनम्, [3]विधाय दत्तवान्वेदान, [4]निःसृतान्,

[Note :- (i) The word 'Paramesthi' 'परमेष्ठि' has the following connotations— (a) the 4-headed Brahma, the patriarch of the Gods and the creator of the creation; (b) other Gods such as the Fire-God; (c) the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic male aspect of creation from whom the rest of the creation emerged and evolved; (d) the first human named Manu who had a gross physical body having eyes which could see; the first intelligent Being who could 'see' the truth enshrined in the Vedas which were uttered by Brahma and were the absolute and immutable truths of creation.

(ii) Different version exists about the first cosmic Male. One belief is that he was Vishnu from whose navel a divine lotus emerged, at the end of which was seated Lord Brahma, the old patriarch of creation. According to this conception, Vishnu is an analogue to Brahm. Another view suggests that he was called the Viraat Purush. But generally speaking, both the terms are synonymously used.

(iii) Regarding the Vedas, again two versions exist — according to one, Lord Viraat Purush gave them to Brahma, the patriarch of the creation, and according to another version they were produced from the mouth of Brahma himself. See also Canto 15, verse no. 7. Basically, the Upanishadic version favours the latter version of the origin of the Vedas, while the Purans prefer the former (the Vishnu) version.]

अहेव हि सर्वेषां योगिनां गुरुरव्ययः ।
धार्मिकागां च गोप्ताहं निहन्ता वेद विद्विषाम् ।।१६।।

I am the eternal, imperishable, supreme and transcendental[1] moral preceptor and guide of the Yogis (ascetics, hermits)[2]. I am the protector and benefactor of those who are righteous, noble and virtuous[3]. I am the vanquisher and slayer of those who are the opponents of the Vedas (and the rightful path shown by them)[4] (16).

[1]ऽव्ययः, [2]सर्वेषां योगिनां गुरु, [3]धार्मिकागां च गोप्ताहं, [4]निहन्ता वेद विद्विषाम्

अहं वै सर्व संसारान्मोचको योगिनामिह ।
संसारहेतुरेवाहं सर्वसंसारवर्जितः ।।१७।।

I join hands with Yogis (hermits and ascetics) to provide liberation

and deliverance to the world[1]. I am the one who is the cause of the entire creation[2] and am the authority that stops the world, or puts a leash on it, or controls and restrains all its activities[3] (17).

[1]सर्व संसारान्मोचको योगिनामिह, [2]संसारहेतुरेवाहं, [3]सर्वसंसारवर्जितः,

[Note :- The hermits and ascetics are righteous and pious people. They act as guide and a beacon of hope for the world which is like a ship trapped in the ocean of delusion and ignorance, buffeted violently by its rough surface. The Lord, along with the Yogis, hermits and other holy and pious people show the right path to the creatures and help in their spiritual liberation from the fetters that shackle them to this delusionary and painful world even as a lighthouse helps the ship to avoid shipwreck in a violent sea.]

अहमेव हि संहर्ता स्त्रष्टाहं परिपालकः ।
मायावी मामिका शक्तिर्माया लोकविमोहिनी ।।१८।।

I am the annihilator/concluder[1], the creator[2] and the sustainer/nourisher[3] of the world. It is my stupendous and magnificently maverick powers[4] that deludes the entire world and keeps it enthralled[5] (18).

[1]अहमेव हि संहर्ता, [2]स्त्रष्टाहं, [3]परिपालकः, [4]मायावी शक्तिर्माया, [5]लोकविमोहिनी

ममैव च पराशक्ति या सा विद्येति गीयते ।
नाशयामि तया मायां योगिनां हृदि संस्थितः ।।१९।।

One of my stupendous, supreme, most marvelous, fascinating and potent powers[1] is known, praised and sung[2] as 'Vidya' (meaning truthful knowledge of the Truth; erudition, sagacity, scholarship, wisdom and expertise obtained as an accompaniment to acquisition of such knowledge; a knowledge which is empirical, logical and rational)[3]. While staying in the bosom (literally, the heart) of Yogis[4], I destroy (eliminate, dispel and remove) that very 'Maya' (delusions and ignorance)[5] which is my own creation (19).

[1]ममैव च पराशक्ति, [2]गीयते, [3]विद्येति, [4]योगिनां हृदि संस्थितः, [5]नाशयामि तया मायां

[Note :- What a paradox of creation —first the delusions are created by ignorance, then it becomes necessary to eliminate both the ignorance and its progeny, the delusion. Well, the first step of creating delusion was very necessary

—just imagine a situation when all humans suddenly become enlightened and realise that all the world is an artificial illusion, that they should contemplate upon the Atma and withdraw themselves from this faulty world. The entire world would become one big hermitage or a monastery inhabited by recluses and monks. There will be no process of procreation, because every household will abhor sexual union. There will be no progress because all people would be satisfied with whatever they have. Necessity would cease to exist, and without necessity there would be no new invention and discovery. While it is true that there would be peace and tranquility in the world, but the spin off would be the complete stopping of the wheel of material progress, discovery and evolution, and there will be no desire accentuated by needs and passions. In brief, the world will stop to move and revert to the 'stone age'.

Since the very purpose of creation would be killed in this eventuality, it was necessary for Brahm to create Maya. But even as anything created with good intentions becomes a Frankenstein Monster one day —as is the case with dynamite, gunpowder, nuclear energy, rocket technology, electronics and even the gun, it becomes imperative to put a leash on this howling, barking and terrifying dog. So, the Lord created 'Vidya' —or knowledge. This Vidya served two purposes —it helped to channelise the vast burst of energy created by delusions into constructive purpose, and at the same time it helped to antidote it by showing the darker side of that Monster. Vidya, in modern parlance, was like the infra red night vision goggle which helps man to see the reality even in the pitch darkness of the night symbolised by the darkness of delusion created by Maya. It was also like razor sharp rays of laser which could penetrate and precisely hit at the core of ignorance and delusion, collectively called Maya. And even as any source of laser beam needs sufficient power to generate it, the heart of the Yogi —who had that imperative potential —was the seat of Atma which is enlightened and knowledgeable. See also Canto 14, verse

no. 6 in this context.]

अहं हि सर्वशक्तीनां प्रवर्तकनिवर्तक: ।
आधारभूत: सर्वेषां निधानममृतस्य च ।।२०।।

I am the origin and progenitor of all 'Shakti' (literally meaning powers, strengths, prowess, vitality, energy, abilities, vigour, might, authority, push, punch and potency)[1]. I am the 'Adhar' of all the Bhuts, i.e., I am the foundation, the basis, the dwelling place and the shelter as well as the strength, powers and potentials upon which the whole creation consisting of the 5 basic elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space) is founded[2]. I am a treasury where the 'Amrit' (the ambrosia or elixir of eternity, beatitude and felicity) is stored[3] (20).

[1]सर्वशक्तीनां प्रवर्तकनिवर्तक:, [2]आधारभूत: सर्वेषां, [3]निधानममृतस्य च

एका सर्वान्तरा शक्ति: करोति विविध जगत् ।
भूत्वा नारायणोऽनन्तो जगन्नाथो जगन्मय: ।।२१।।

That one supreme authority that is all-pervading, omnipresent and immanent[1] has delineated the world into myriad forms with diverse shapes, contours and qualities[2]. It is the same authoritative entity that has revealed itself as 'Narayan' (Vishnu)[3], 'Anant' (literally meaning one without an end)[4], 'Jagganath' (literally meaning the Lord of the world)[5] and 'Jaganmaye' (literally meaning one who has revealed himself as this world, uniformally and universally pervading throughout it)[6] (21).

[1]एका सर्वान्तरा शक्ति:, [2]करोति विविध जगत्, [3]नारायणो, [4]ऽनन्तो, [5]जगन्नाथो, [6]जगन्मय:

तृतीया महती शक्तिर्निहन्ति सकलं जगत् ।
तामसी मे समाख्याता कालात्मा रुद्ररूपिणी ।।२२।।

The 3rd great and potential power[1] that annihilates or destroys the entire creation[2] is known as 'Tamsi' (referring to those qualities that are considered lowly and mean, leading to vices and perversion and other unholy and unrighteous behaviours)[3]. It is also known as 'Kalatma' (literally meaning destruction and death personified)[4], and it is a manifestation of 'Rudra' (or a form of Shiva as an embodiment of anger, wrath, vehemence and retribution)[5]. [See canto 14, verse no. 13-13½](22).

[1]तृतीया महती शक्ति, [2]र्निहन्ति सकलं जगत्, [3]तामसी, [4]कालात्मा, [5]रुद्ररूपिणी

[Note : – There are 3 basic categories of qualities in a creature-

Sat, the most noble and best of the three qualities, Raj which is the medium and mediocre quality, and Tam which is the lowly and the meanest quality. It is this 3rd quality which leads to all the degrading and demeaning actions by a creature—such as having perversions, animosity, ill will, jealousy, hatred, anger, wrathfulness etc. People with a predominance of 'Tam' quality are quarrelsome and always ready to create nuisance. It is considered to be the quality which stands for death, ruin and destruction as opposed to 'Sat' quality which stands for creation, development, evolution and upliftment of the creature, and 'Raj' quality which stands for enhancement, sustenance and progress in this world]

ध्यानेन मां प्रपश्यन्ति केचिज्ज्ञानेन चापरे ।
अपरे भक्तियोगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ।
सर्वेषामेव भक्तानामेष प्रियतरो मम ।।२३।।

Some see my divine and auspicious form by doing 'Dhyan' (i.e., during contemplation and mediation)[1] while others perceive me by 'Gyan' (i.e., by pursuing the truthful knowledge as contained in the scriptures)[2]. There are some who pursue the path of 'Bhakti' (having devotion and doing worship)[3] while others follow the tents of 'Karma Yog' (which emphasises the importance of doing deeds righteously, virtuously, dispassionately and selflessly as a means to serve the Lord and attain him)[4] in order to have my divine and auspicious view. Out of all of them, those who are my devotees, i.e., those who follow the path of devotion and worship[5], are most dear to me[6] (23).

[1]ध्यानेन मां प्रपश्यन्ति, [2]केचिज्ज्ञानेन चापरे, [3]अपरे भक्तियोगेन, [4]कर्मयोगेन चापरे, [5]भक्तानामेष, [6]प्रियतरो मम

यो विज्ञानेन मां नित्यमाराधयति नान्यथा ।
अन्येच ये त्रयो भक्ता मदाराधनकांक्षिण: ।।२४।।
तेऽपि मां प्राप्नुवन्त्येव नावर्तते च वै पुन: ।
मया ततमिदं कृत्स्नं प्रधान पुरुषात्मकम् ।
मयेव संस्थितं विश्वं मया सम्प्रेर्यते जगत् ।।२५।।

Those who worship and honour me[1] by following the path of 'Gyan' (following the path of truthful knowledge about Atma, Brahm etc. acquired by studying the Vedas and other scriptures)[2] are not doing so in vain[3]. All the other three types of worship (i.e., Dhyan, Gyan

and Karma Yoga as defined in verse no. 23 above)[4] offered to me by my sincere devotees[5] also entitles and enables them to have access to me[6] who am the chief Lord of the creation[7] (i.e., they can also attain the supreme Brahm), and consequentially they do not have to come back into this world again (i.e., they do not take re-birth because they would have attained emancipation and deliverance of their souls)[8]. This entire cosmos is established in me[9] and I am the one undisputed authority who regulates it[10]. (24-25).

[1]मां नित्यमाराधयति, [2]यो विज्ञानेन, [3]नान्यथा, [4]अन्येच ये त्रयो भक्ता मदाराधन, [5]भक्ता कांक्षिण:, [6]तेऽपि मां प्राप्नुवन्त्येव, [7]प्रधान पुरुषात्मकम्, [8]नावर्तते च वै पुन:, [9]मयेव संस्थितं विश्वं, [10]मया सम्प्रेर्यते जगत्,

[Note :- (i) See also Canto 14, verse no. 2 in this context.

(ii) It is pertinent to note here that the main thrust of Yoga is to establish a union between the conscious Atma of an individual and the conscious Atma of the cosmos. Besides the exercise aspect of Yoga, there are other schools of philosophy for this 'conscious realisation'.

There are said to be 4 main paths of Yoga which lead to self realisation in a man or makes him aware of the super conscious residing in him. They are — (i) Gyan Yoga, (ii) Bhakti Yoga, (iii) Karma Yoga and (iv) Raj Yoga.

(i) Gyan Yoga involves the intellect and mind to determine and delineate the true and the false; it helps to access and understand the reality and falsehood behind the manifested visible world which appears to be 'real' but is actually like a 'shadow of the truth'. This Gyan Yoga helps to establish the mind firmly into seeing unity in diversity. Those following Gyan Yoga are called 'seers' because they can 'see' beyond the visible, multifarious and bewildering variety of this false world. Gyan Yoga is in the realm of the intellect and mind of a creature.

(ii) Bhakti Yoga refers to having devotion for a chosen Godhead who is a person's ideal, on whom he showers all his adoration, and on whom he focuses his attention. He is emotionally and sentimentally involved with his deity. Hence, the heart is the realm of Bhakti Yoga; it helps to commune

with the divine.

(iii) Karma Yoga expounds on the importance of doing deeds and taking actions, but with a different attitude. It stresses that we must not get 'involved or attached' to those deeds or action in as much as we shouldn't be bothered about the rewards or punishments incumbent on such deeds or actions. We must do them dispassionately and with detachment. The action or deed should be treated as one's offering to the God as well as an offering to the sacred fire sacrifice. This will ensure that the actions or deeds are not unrighteousness, corrupt or evil. On the contrary, whatever is done in which a person's subtle sub-conscious says is not the correct thing to do will be deemed to be unrighteous, unethical and unlawful, and therefore cannot be an offering to either the God or the sacred fire sacrifice.

(iv) Raj Yoga is the psycho-spiritual practice of exercise and breath control; it involves the various steps involved in meditation and contemplation, as is generally understood by the term Yoga. This Yoga lays emphasis on physical training of the body and the mind, and is the subject matter of numerous Upanishads dealing with such exercises (e.g., Yog Chudamani of Sam Veda). It deals with such subject as Pranayam, purification and activation of Naadis, kindling of Chakras (subtle energy centers in the body) etc..

These 4 types of Yogas are not mutually exclusive; they coalesce and overlap with each other and their main aim is to help the aspirant seeker in his pursuit of 'self realisation'.]

नाहं प्रेरयिताकीश परमं योगमाश्रित: ।
प्रेरयामि जगत्कृत्स्नमेतद्यो वेद सोऽमृत: ।।२६।।

I rely perpetually on eternal Yoga (meditation and contemplation) that is supreme, transcendental and eternal in nature[1]. I am not inspired or advised by anyone[2]. Instead, I am the only one authority who inspires this world to expand in its diverse and myriad forms; I impel it, drive it, inspire it and keep its momentum[3]. Anyone who knows and realises this has known and realised the essence (of the

teachings of the scriptures)[4] (26).

[1]परमं योगमाश्रितः, [2]नाहं प्रेरयिताकीश, [3]प्रेरयामि जगत्कृत्स्न, [4]मेतद्यो वेद सोऽमृतः

पश्याम्यशेषमेवेदं वर्तमानं स्वभावतः ।
करोति काले भगवान्महायोगेश्वर स्वयम् ।।२७।।

By nature[1] I look at this world, perceive it and understand it[2] as it is present now[3]. At the opportune time[4], the Lord known as 'Maha Yogeshwar' (or the Lord who is the great Lord of all ascetics)[5] creates it himself[6] (27).

[1]स्वभावतः, [2]पश्याम्यशेषमेवेदं, [3]वर्तमानं, [4]काले, [5]भगवान्महायोगेश्वर, [6]करोति स्वयम्

योगं सम्प्रोच्यते योगी मायी शास्त्रेषु सूरिभिः ।
योगेश्वरोऽसौ भगवान्महादेवो महाप्रभुः ।।२८।।

Those ascetics who are experts, learned and scholarly[1] in the scriptures and the texts dealing with Yoga' (doing meditation and contemplation)[2], know about the art, craft and skills[3] used by the maverick creator to create this creation and ensure its annihilation or conclusion at the same time. They call all this that is happening a form of Yoga[4]. [That is, they treat the whole world as a means to apply in practice what they have learned in the scriptures and proved by doing meditation and contemplation.] The great Lord Mahadeo[5] is the Lord of all the ascetics[6]. [Here, Mahadeo is Lord Shiva because he is the patron God of ascetics.] (28).

[1]योगी सूरिभिः, [2]शास्त्रेषु, [3]मायी, [4]योगं सम्प्रोच्यते, [5]भगवान्महादेवो महाप्रभुः, [6]योगेश्वरोऽसौ

महत्वात्सर्वसत्त्वानां वरत्वात्परमेश्वरः ।
प्रोच्यते भगवान्ब्रह्मा महान्ब्रह्ममयो यतः ।।२९।।

He (the supreme, transcendental, sublime and all-pervading Brahm) is the ultimate and magnificent essence of all the essences that exist in the world[1]. Though he resides uniformally in all the creatures as their Atma, he is much superior to them, he transcends and supersedes them, and that is why he is called 'Parmeshwar' (literally meaning the supreme and ultimate Lord God of all that exist)[2]. When the exalted Supreme Being (here referring to the macrocosmic form of Brahm, that is the Viraat Purush)[3] embodies in him all the virtues of Brahm, he is known by the name of Lord Brahma, the creator[4] (29).

[1]महत्वात्सर्वसत्त्वानां, [2]वरत्वात्परमेश्वरः, [3]महान्ब्रह्ममयो यतः, [4]प्रोच्यते भगवान्ब्रह्मा

[Note :- (i) Brahm is the ultimate truth though the other Gods such as Vishnu, Brahma, Mahadeo or Shiva, Indra etc. also have a truthful existence. It is a case analogues to refining any liquid extract of, say, a flower many times over so as to arrive at the purest form of the essence of the flower. Taking another example, we may distil water many times over to get the purest and the ultimately best form of refined water. But even the less distilled water or essence of a flower would still be known as water and essence respectively.

(ii) Brahma, the patriarch of the creation, has certain characteristic qualities which are exclusive to him and which make him the nearest analogue to Brahm, the Supreme Being who is the Supreme Soul of the cosmos. Brahma has the power to create and control destiny —and therefore he virtually decides the time of annihilation or death of the world, though the actual task of annihilating or ending this world or causing death is delegated to Lord Shiva, but the mandate to do so comes from the supreme authority, who is not Brahma but Brahm, but the former has been delegated this authority by the latter. Brahma unfolds the world when he turns his head in the 4 directions and uttered the four basic words Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Maha (symbolising the creation of the earth, the sky, the heavens and the great creation having countless variety and number of creatures, small and big, who would populate it) as well as the Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sam and Atharva) and the profound body of wisdom and knowledge contended in them. (See Mahopanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 9 of the Sam Veda tradition). Knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment are the chief characteristic of Brahm represented by the Atma/soul. Brahma also has these characteristic features because he is the one who has not only created the physical world but also the great body of knowledge in the form of the Vedas. Brahma is depicted as a white-bearded and learned grandfather of creation. This is a symbolic way of saying that he is the oldest and wisest one amongst all those who live. Even Vishnu and Shiva and all the other Gods are much younger to him. Both the two

Gods (Vishnu and Shiva) are known to exhibit some elements of Rajoguna and Tamogunas, i.e., they have some sort of worldly characteristics such as showing anger, having passion etc., or assuming different forms as in the case of their various manifestations, but Brahma, the old bearded patriarch, remains one original without any manifestation, much like the supreme Brahm who remains detached from and dispassionate towards the creation, although he is the cause of it, is responsible for it and is the resting place for it.]

यो मामेवं विजानाति महायोगेश्वरेश्वरम् ।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ।।३०।।

A person who realises the truth about me and my truthful form and recognises me as a 'Mahayogeshwar'[1], is able to remain steady, unwavering, unfaltering in his spiritual pursuits[2]. There is no doubt about it[3] (30).

[1]मामेवं विजानाति महायोगेश्वरेश्वरम्, [2]सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन, [3]नात्र संशयः

[Note :- The divine, great and majestic Lord of ascetics, the Lord who is the aim and objective of all meditation and contemplation or Yoga, the Lord who is superior to all other Gods and creatures, the great Lord who ever remains engrossed in Yoga, and the Lord who is transcendental, auspicious, supreme, great, stupendous and majestic amongst all that exist, is a Yogi or an exalted ascetic par excellence. The scriptures say that the Viraat Purush had to do meditation and contemplation or Yoga in order to initiate the process of creation. Even Brahma, the creator, had to do yoga (meditation) to initiate the physical process of creation (Aeiteriopanishad of Rig Veda tradition). So the epithet 'Mahayogeshwar' is very apt for Sri Ram who is not only a manifestation of the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu, but also represents Brahma, the creator, as well as Shiva, the concluder. In fact, all those three Gods of the Trinity had done meditation, and Sri Ram personifies all the three of them at once. That is why 'Maha' or 'the great and majestic one' is used as a prefix or an epithet while describing him as a 'Yogeshwar' or the 'Lord of Yoga (meditation)' or the 'Lord

of those who do Yoga']

सोऽहं प्रेरयिता देवः परमानन्दमाश्रितः ।
तिष्ठामि सततं योगी यस्तद्वेद स वेदवित् ।।३१।।

I am that Supreme Being[1] who inspires and empowers all the Gods[2]. I am an embodiment of supreme beatitude and felicity[3]. I am permanently established in Yoga (doing meditation and contemplation)[4]. Anyone who realises and understands this fact is deemed to know the essence of the Vedas[5] (31).

[1]सोऽहं, [2]प्रेरयिता देवः, [3]परमानन्दमाश्रितः, [4]तिष्ठामि सततं योगी, [5]यस्तद्वेद स वेदवित्,

इति गुह्यतमं ज्ञानं सर्ववेदेषु निश्चितम् ।
प्रसन्नचेतसे देयं धार्मिकायाहिताग्नये ।।३२।।

This most profound but secret wisdom and knowledge[1] has been determined and postulated as the 'truth' by the Vedas themselves[2]. [And, therefore, there is no doubt about it.] It should be divulged or preached[3] only to those persons who perform their religious duties[4], such as observing different sacraments and doing various sacrifices and other righteous deeds[5], most cheerfully and willingly[6]. [This is because only those people who have interest in spiritual matters will take interest in these tenets and benefit from them. For the rest, it would be tantamount to barking up the wrong tree and trying to make a piece of coal white by washing it with soap and water. Such people will ridicule it.] (32)

[1]इति गुह्यतमं ज्ञानं, [2]सर्ववेदेषु निश्चितम्, [3]देयं, [4]धार्मिकायाहिता, [5]ग्नये, [6]प्रसन्नचेतसे

Thus ends Canto 13 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the importance of having devotion and reverence for the supreme Lord of the creation in the form of Sri Ram.

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Canto 14
Sri Ram's divine, supreme, transcendental cosmic powers and stupendous potentials

In this Canto, Sri Ram describes the incredible nature of his divine powers which are supreme and transcendental, stupendous, eclectic and most magnificent. He in essence tells Hanuman that whatever is seen or perceived in this world, all the happenings and all the driving forces of nature are nothing else but his own potential powers and glory revealed in myriad forms. He is the ultimate Authority who has delegated his powers to different entities to carry on with the routine work of the creation; everything works under the Lord's command and control mechanism, are subject to the laws and rules laid down by the supreme Lord. No one can violate the Lord's mandate. This whole creation is due to the wish of the Lord, is sustained and protected by him, and it finally dissolves in him. This is the essence of this Canto which also concludes Sri Ram's discourse for Hanuman which he had started to give him in Canto 11. These four cantos, nos. 11-14, have a high element of spiritual quotient in them. They summarise the principal doctrines of the Upanishads in a succinct manner and in a lucid language.

सर्वलोकैकनिर्माता सर्वलोकैकरक्षिता: ।
सर्वलोकैकसंहर्ता सर्वात्माऽहं सनातन: ।।१।।

I am the creator and progenitor[1], the sustainer and protector[2], the vanquisher and annihilator[3] of the entire creation[4]. I am the Atma that is all-pervading, omnipresent and immanent[5] as well as eternal, infinite, universal, irrefutable and truthful[6] (1).

[1]निर्माता, [2]रक्षिता:, [3]संहर्ता, [4]सर्वलोकैक, [5]सर्वात्माऽहं, [6]सनातन:

सर्वेषामेव वस्तूनामन्तर्यामी पिता ह्यहम् ।
मय्येवान्त:स्थितं सर्वं नाहं सर्वत्र संस्थित: ।।२।।

I am the Father[1] who is omniscient and all-knowing[2] as well as a resident of the bosom of all the creatures[3]. All that exist in the world is established in my bosom (because I am all-encompassing)[4]. Nay, it is me who is established everywhere (because I am omnipresent, all-pervading and immanent)[5] (2).

[1]पिता ह्यहम्, [2]मन्तर्यामी, [3]सर्वेषामेव वस्तूना, [4]मय्येवान्त:स्थितं सर्वं, [5]नाहं सर्वत्र संस्थित:

[Note :- This is a magnificent verse. The word used for the supreme Lord is 'Father', the way he is described in the Holy Bible— *'I and my Father are one'* (Gospel of St. John, 10/30). The Father referred to here is the Brahm of the Upanishads.]

भवता चाद्भुते दृष्टं यत्स्वरूपं तु मामकम् ।
ममैषा ह्युपमा वत्स मायया दर्शिता मया ।।३।।

Oh son (Hanuman)! The magnificent and majestic form[1] of my divine self that you had seen (as in Canto 10, verse nos. 13-18) was created by me using my stupendous maverick and magical powers to create visual images (i.e., I can create the greatest illusions in this world like an expert magician)[2] (3).

[1]चाद्भुते दृष्टं यत्स्वरूपं, [2]मायया दर्शिता मया

सर्वेषामेव भावानामन्तरा समवस्थित: ।
प्रेरयामि जगत्सर्वं क्रियाशक्तिरियं मम ।।४।।

I am inherently present as an integral part of all emotions and sentiments, all inclinations and tendencies and lend them their innate qualities and virtues[1]. I am the one who inspires, impels, empowers and drives this whole world to do what it is doing[2]. Whatever is happening is a display of my own powers to act and do deeds[3] (4).

[1]सर्वेषामेव भावानामन्तरा समवस्थित:, [2]प्रेरयामि जगत्सर्वं, [3]क्रियाशक्तिरियं मम

[Note :- Compare this verse with verse no. 3 and 26 of Canto 13.]

मयेदं चेष्टते विश्वं मत्स्वभावनुवर्ति च ।
सोऽहं काले जगत्कृत्स्नं करोमि हनुमन् किल ।।५।।

This world is a result of my own efforts[1] and it follows my views, nature and tendencies[2]. Oh Hanuman! It is me who[3] initiates the process of creation at the opportune time[4] (5).

[1]मयेदं चेष्टते विश्वं, [2]मत्स्वभावनुवर्ति, [3]सोऽहं, [4]काले जगत्कृत्स्नं करोमि

[Note :- See also Canto 13, verse nos. 15, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26 and 31 in this context.]

संहराम्येकरूपेण द्विधावस्था ममैव तु ।
आदिमध्यान्तनिर्मुक्तो मायातत्त्व प्रवर्तक: ।।६।।

In one of my forms, I am the annihilator or concluder of this world (or bring about the end of this entire creation)[1]. This is my dual role (as a creator as well as an annihilator)[2]. I am without a beginning,

middle and an end[3]. I am the one who inspires the elementary form of 'Maya' (the virtues of delusions and illusion creation in this artificial world) to play its maverick tricks and cast it spell on the whole world[4] (6).

[1]संहराम्येकरूपेण, [2]द्विधावस्था ममैव, [3]आदिमध्यान्तनिर्मुक्तो, [4]मायातत्त्व प्रवर्तक:

[Note :- (i) The same dual role of the Lord has been cited in Canto 13, verse no. 17-19, 21-22, 29-30 and explained as a note to them. (ii) Maya, as referred to in this verse and verse no. 3 above, refer to the magical powers of the Lord to create delusions and ignorance about the actual truth, leading the creature towards falsehoods and misconceptions. It is almost like creating the mirage in the desert. The concept of Maya has been explained in detaial in note to verse no. 35 of canto 25 of this book]

क्षोभयामि च सर्गादो प्रधानपुरुषावुभौ ।
ताभ्यां सञ्जायते सर्वं संयुक्ताभ्यां परस्परम् ।।७।।

In the very beginning of creation, it was me (as a subtle, invisible, divine force) that had caused perplexity and agitation[1] in the mind of the supreme, omnipotent, almighty and majestic Lord called Vibho as well as in the mind of the Chief Purush[2]. They together[3] produced the whole creation as we know it[4] (7).

[1]क्षोभयामि, [2]प्रधानपुरुषावुभौ, [3]संयुक्ताभ्यां, [4]परस्परम् सञ्जायते सर्वं

[Note :- (i) The word 'Vibho' is an epithet used to describe the virtues of Lord Vishnu who is synonymous with both Narayan as well as the Viraat Purush. The word 'Chief Purush' is here used to denote the Viraat Purush as well as Lord Shiva or Mahadev. Though appearing to be confusing, when the fact that 'their union resulted in the creation getting started' is considered, the distinction becomes clear in view of what has been unambiguously stated in an Upanishad called Maho-panishad, Canto 1 of Sam Veda tradition cited in the explanatory note to verse no. 10 below. The Viraat Purush felt lonely and so he meditated. The very fact that he felt lonely shows that loneliness was agitating his mind and was a cause of perplexity for him. He meditated so that there can be some activity in his non-active environs. From

him was thus produced the trident wielding Lord Shiva, the annihilator and then later on came Brahma, the creator. The rest of the story is narrated in note to verse no. 10 below.

(ii) Another interpretation of this verse is that 'Vibho' refers to Brahm while the word 'Chief Purush' refers to Lord Vishnu in the form of Viraat Purush. It is due to the joint efforts of Brahm and the Viraat Purush that this creation has come into being.

(iii) Verse no. 6 above tells us that Sri Ram, as the Supreme Being, is both the creator as well as the annihilator of the world, roles played separately by Vishnu and Shiva respectively. Hence, the implication is that Sri Ram represents both Vishnu and Shiva at the same time.]

महदादिक्रमेणैव मम तेजो विजृम्भितम् ।
यो हि सर्वजगत्साक्षी कालचक्रप्रवर्तक: ।।८।।

In the form of 'Mahat' (literally meaning my magnificence, glory, majesty, stupendous powers) and the other aspects/elements of creation[1], it is my marvelous glory, vital energy and stupendous majesty[2] that pulsates, radiates and spreads everywhere, in all the directions of the cosmos[3]. It is my consciousness and vitality that is witnessing everything in this world[4], and it is it that keeps the wheel of time and circumstances turning endlessly[5] (8).

[1]महदादिक्रमेणैव, [2]मम तेजो, [3]विजृम्भितम्, [4]यो हि सर्वजगत्साक्षी, [5]कालचक्रप्रवर्तक:

हिरण्यगर्भो मार्तण्ड: सोऽपि मद्देहसम्भव: ।
तस्मै दिव्यं स्वमैश्वर्यं ज्ञानयोगं सनातनम् ।।९।।

The Hiranyagarbh[1] is radiant and splendorous like the sun called 'Martand'[2]. It has been created from my transcendental, subtle and sublime body[3]. I have bestowed upon it my divine potentials and majestic glories[4] as well as empowered it with 'Gyan' (wisdom, erudition, sagacity, expertise, skills and knowledge)[5] that is eternal, imperishable, truthful and infinite[6] (9).

[1]हिरण्यगर्भो, [2]मार्तण्ड:, [3]सोऽपि मद्देहसम्भव:, [4]दिव्यं स्वमैश्वर्यं, [5]ज्ञानयोगं, [6]सनातनम्

[Note :- (i) The word 'Hiranyagarbh' has two components—'Hiranya' meaning yellow, and 'Garbha' meaning the womb. Hiranyagarbh was the primordial cosmic fertilised egg deriving its name from the fact that its yolk core was yellow

and glowing with an incandescent light like the one effusing from the splendours sun in the sky called the Martand. It was lodged in the womb-like navel of the Viraat Purush. It also resembled the musk deer in the sense that musk spreads its fragrance everywhere but it is not visible because it is hidden in the abdomen of the deer. Similarly, this Hiranyagarbh had spread its glory, radiance and splendour through the length and breath of the void of the cosmos, but was not visible itself.

(ii) This entire concept of Hiranyagarbh being produced from the body of the Supreme Being called Narayan or Ishwar have been elaborately dealt with in Maho-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8 of the Sam Veda tradition.

(iii) Hiranyagarbh is the cosmic subtle body according to the Vedanta. The 'body' referred to by Sri. Ram here is the causal body of the macrocosm, called 'Ishwar' by Vedanta. See also note to verse no. 10 below.

(iv) The word 'Martand' refers to the Sun or the Sun-God; as such, the word is used as an adjective to describe anything that has the characteristics of the sun, such as being glorious, splendorous, dazzling and radiant as well as self illuminated and illuminating the realm around it, being powerful and central to existence.]

दत्तवानात्मजावेदान् कल्पादौ चतुरः किल ।
स मन्नियोगतो ब्रह्मा सदा मद्भाव भावितः ।।१०।।

To my offspring (created from me when this Hiranyagarbh matured and this cosmic egg hatched into the Viraat Purush), I gave the 4 Vedas[1] at the beginning of the 'Kalpa' (i.e., at the beginning of a fresh cycle of creation)[2]. That offspring was called Brahmaa[3], and he was authorised by me to start the process of creation; he remains under my control and guidance. He follows my instructions, my views and remains faithful to my wishes[4] (10).

[1]दत्तवानात्मजावेदान् चतुरः, [2]कल्पादौ, [3]ब्रह्मा, [4]मन्नियोगतो सदा मद्भाव भावितः

[Note :- (i) The word 'Kalpa' literally means a period of times equivalent to 432 x 10^7 earth years of mortals which is equivalent to 1 day of Brahma, the creator. But in the context of this text, it means the day when Brahma was born, and this creation first came into existence.

(ii) Brahma was created from the Viraat Purush. He was assigned the task of creation, the desire for which first originated in the mind of the Viraat Purush because he did not like loneliness. The entire sequence of events has been described in Maho-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1-9 of the Sam Veda tradition. Briefly, it is as follows— The Supreme Being present at the beginning of creation was all alone. He was called Narayan. This Being did not like the void of nothingness (Canto 1, verse 1-3). So he did a symbolic Yoga called 'Yogastom' and produced the 11 organs (5 organs of perception, 5 organs of action and 1 mind-intellect called the Mana), 'Ahankar' (ego and pride), 'Pran' (breath and life) and 'Atma' (soul; the atomic nucleus, as it were, of the cosmos), bringing the total to 14 basic elements of creation. Besides that, he created 'Buddhi' or intelligence. He also created the 5 sheaths or veils that cover the Atma (i.e., the food, vital air, mental, intellect and bliss sheaths) to encase and cover the Atma, and the five basic elements called the 'Bhuts' (the earth, water, fire, air and space) which were to act as building blocks for the would-be gross creation. These elements formed the first gross body of the cosmos, called the Viraat Purush. (Canto 1, verse no. 4-6).

As a next step, Narayan injected himself in the Viraat Purush like a spark of fire in a haystack, to infuse the much needed vitality of life in the gross body of the Viraat, and literally and virtually setting the whole stack, which was hitherto inert and neutral, afire. Henceforth, Narayan, who was none other than the supreme, transcendental Brahm, began to be known as Viraat Purush.

Now, this Viraat meditated, and from his forehead emerged the great Lord called Mahadev, or Lord Shiva (Canto 1, verse no. 7). The Viraat meditated again, and due to this exertion, sweat drops appeared on his forehead, which coalesced to form the primordial fluid called 'Apaha' (अपः— literally meaning water). From this coagulated cosmic jelly came into being the Hiranyagarbh which further evolved into

the 4-headed Brahma (Canto 1, verse no. 8).

The 4-headed Brahma wished to do something; and so he turned his face in the 4 cardinal directions— East, West, North and South, and each time he uttered some words which formed the nucleus of the various manifestations of creation. While facing East, he pronounced the word 'Bhu' (भू—earth), and created the Gayatri Chanda (which are poetic composition styles), the Fire-God and the Rig Veda; facing West, he said 'Bhuvaha' (भुवः —the sky) and created the Tristup Chanda and the Yajur Veda as well as the Wind-God; facing North, he said 'Swaha' (स्वः —heavens) and created the Jagati Chanda, the Sun-God and the Sam Veda; and finally facing South, he said 'Mahah' (महः —the great worlds), the Anustup Chanda, the Moon-God and the Atharva Veda (Canto 1, verse no. 9).

Brahma is therefore known as the creator of this whole manifested world. But as we have seen, he derives his powers and authority to create what he has created from the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic primary Male aspect of creation in whom the whole creation resides; who not only pervades in it but also envelopes it from all the sides like a parameter wall, and whose authority goes even beyond that outer parameter wall of the cosmos, right up to where infinity goes! Further, this Viraat Purush has himself evolved from Brahm known as Narayan. It was this form that was revealed to Hanuman by Sri Ram in Canto no. 10, verse no. 13 -18 of this Adbhut Ramayan.

The above is the version of creation of this world according to the Purans also. From metaphysical point of view, Narayan is called 'Ishwar' and he is the causal body of the cosmos, while 'Hiranyagarbh' is the subtle body and 'Viraat Purush' is the gross body of the cosmos at its invisible macro level. Their counterparts at the micro level of the visible creation, e.g., the individual creature, are 'Pragna' which is the causal body of the creature, 'Taijas' which is the subtle body, and 'Vishwa' which is the gross body. These 6 terms are used for the pure consciousness when it acts

through the 3 levels of existence, viz., the deep sleep state of consciousness, the dream state and the waking state of consciousness respectively of the cosmos in the first three cases, and the individual creature in the latter three cases. A separate appendix explains these concepts briefly]

दिव्यं तन्मामकैश्वर्यं सर्वदा वहति स्वयम् ।
स सर्वलोकनिर्माता मन्नियोगेन सर्ववित् ।।११।।

He (Brahma, the creator) always and constantly wears the mantle[1] of my divine glories, majesty, splendour, grandeur, powers of supremacy and sway over the whole creation[2]. That creator of the whole creation[3] follows my wishes and orders (or, he does what I desire to be done or works in consultation with me)[4] (11).

[1]सर्वदा वहति स्वयम्, [2]दिव्यं तन्मामकैश्वर्यं, [3]सर्वलोकनिर्माता, [4]स मन्नियोगेन सर्ववित्

भूत्वा चतुर्मुखः सर्वं सृजत्येवात्मसम्भवः ।
योऽपि नारायणोऽनन्तो लोकानां प्रभवाव्ययः ।।१२।।
ममैव परमा मूर्तिः करोति परिपालनम् ।१२½।

He assumed 4 heads as per my wish[1] and made the creation of this whole universe possible[2] (11½).

Similarly, Narayan[3], who is endless and infinite[4], is the supreme Lord of all the worlds created by Brahmaa[5] and who is imperishable and eternal[6] (12), sustains, nourishes, protects and generally takes care of the creation[7] as my supreme representative and my embodiment, i.e., he is like my own image, my own self, and he has all the characteristic virtues, powers and potentials that I have[8] (12½). [11½-12½]

[1]भूत्वा चतुर्मुखः, [2]सर्वं सृजत्येवात्मसम्भवः, [3]योऽपि नारायणो, [4]ऽनन्तो, [5]लोकानां प्रभ, [6]ऽव्ययः, [7]करोति परिपालनम्, [8]ममैव परमा मूर्तिः

[Note :- Here Sri Ram treats 'Narayan' as being distinct from his own self. There should be no confusion here because Sri Ram is 'Brahm' or Ishwar personified, whereas Narayan is another name of Vishnu. Sri Ram is talking in the language of Vedanta here, and not that of the Purans, for according to the latter, Sri Ram is the incarnation of Narayan or Vishnu, and as such this verse will appear to have no coherent meaning. See also canto 13, verse no. 21]

योऽन्तकः सर्वभूतानां रुद्रं कालात्मकः प्रभुः ।।१३।।

मदाज्ञयाऽसौ सततं संहारत्येव मे तनु: ।१३½।

He who is the annihilator or terminator of all the 'Bhuts' (i.e., the mortal creatures)[1] is called Rudra (Lord Shiva)[2]. That Lord[3] is my manifestation as the annihilator or terminator of all that exist[4]. I have assumed that body or form[5] to vanquish and slay everything (that is evil and pervert)[6]. It is under my orders and on my authrotiy[7] that anything is ever done[8]. [See also canto 13, verse no. 22] (13-13½).

[1]योऽन्तक: सर्वभूतानां, [2]रुद्रं, [3]प्रभु:, [4]कालात्मक:, [5]मे तनु:, [6]संहारत्येव, [7]मदाज्ञयाऽसौ, [8]सततं

हव्यं वहति देवानां कव्यं कव्याशिनामपि ।।१४।।
पाकं च कुरुते वहि: सोऽपि मच्छक्तिचोदित: ।१४½।

The offerings of food that are made to the Gods[1] as well as to the dead ancestors[2] (14) are cooked[3] by the fire[4] which derives the powers to do so (i.e., to cook) from me[5]. That is, the vital energy and heat that the fire requires to do anything is not of its own origin, but has been given to it by me. I have delegated this authority to the Fire-God. It is but my energy and my potentials which the fire possesses (14½). [14-14½]

[1]हव्यं वहति देवानां, [2]कव्यं कव्याशिनामपि, [3]पाकं च कुरुते, [4]वहि:, [5]सोऽपि मच्छक्तिचोदित:

भुक्तमाहारजात यत्पचत्येतदहनिशम् ।।१५।।
वैश्वानरोऽग्निर्भगवानीश्वरस्य नियोगत: ।१५½।

Whatever food that is eaten[1] is digested in the body by the eternal fire present in it[2]. This fire is called 'Lord Vaishwanar'[3] who performs this task on my instructions and authority. That is, I give that 'fire' its strength, ability, potential and energy to enable it to digest all that is eaten by a creature. The fire acts upon my specific direction and command. I have appointed this Vaishwanar Fire (Agni) to perform this task on my behalf[4] (15-15½).

[1]भुक्तमाहारजात, [2]यत्पचत्येतदहनिशम्, [3]वैश्वानरोऽग्निर्भगवानीश्वरस्य, [4]नियोगत:

[Note :- (i) The word 'Vaishwanar Agni' (वैश्वानरोऽग्नि) refers to the eternal fire which burns in the cosmos in a subtle and imperceptible form to keep the flame of life inherently and constantly burning. It represents the 'consciousness' factor of the creation; the 'warmth' of fire is a sign of life whereas 'cold' is a harbinger of and synonym with death. Amongst the five elements created at the time of creation (earth, water,

fire, air, space), it is the fire which is the only element which has energy, heat, light, splendour, dazzle and radiance. The water will be nothing else but ice and of no use to the creature without fire as far as its ability to harbour and sustain life is concerned. Similarly, the earth would freeze cold and covered with a thick sheet of ice were it not for the eternal fire burning inside it, even under the ocean bed covered to the brim with water which acts as an antidote to fire. This very fact shows that the Supreme Lord is active in the fire and prevents it from being doused by water because the Lord needs it to sustain life as much as he needs the water. Further, without heat there will be no seasons, no currents, no movements in the air. There will be no formation of clouds and there will be no rainfall in the absence of heat. In brief, the vital spark of life in this world is represented by the 'fire element', hence, it is called the 'Lord of the Vishwa', or Lord Vaishwanar. Sri Ram means that this fire element derives its vitality, stamina, energy and potentials from Brahm whose manifestation Sri Ram is.

(ii) The word 'Niyojan or Niyogat' 'नियोगत' literally means to appoint, to direct, to order, to deploy. Hence, the fire has been appointed, directed, ordered and deployed by the supreme Lord to carry out the function of digesting the food eaten by the creature to help sustain its life and provide it with the necessary energy and nourishment.]

यो हि सर्वाम्भसां योनिर्वरुणो देवपुङ्गव: ।।१६।।
स सञ्जीवयते सर्वमीशस्यैव नियोगत: ।१६½।

The patron and exalted[1] deity for all the forms that the water element has taken in this creation[2] is called 'Varun'[3]. He (Varun) sustains and propagates life in this world[4] with the powers, authority and the ability to do so[5] delegated to it by the supreme Lord of the creation. He works under his (i.e., my) direction[6] (16-16½).

[1]देवपुङ्गव:, [2]सर्वाम्भसां योनि, [3]र्वरुणो, [4]सञ्जीवयते, [5]नियोगत:, [6]सर्वमीशस्यैव

योऽन्तस्तिष्ठति भूतानां बहिर्देवो निरञ्जन: ।।१७।।
मदाज्ञयासौ भूतानां शरीराणि बिभर्ति हि ।१७½।

That Lord who is known as 'Niranjan' (literally, one who is invisible,

pure, holy and divine as well as without any faults, taints and blemishes)[1] and who is present inside as well as outside of a creature[2], looks after, sustains, protects and nourishes the bodies of all the creatures[3] under my orders, authority, powers and command[4] (17-17½).

[1]देवो निरञ्जन:, [2]योऽन्तस्तिष्ठति भूतानां बर्हि, [3]भूतानां शरीराणि बिभर्ति, [4]मदाज्ञयासौ

सोऽपि सञ्जीवनो नृणां देवानाममृताकर: ।।१८।।

सोम: स मन्नियोगेन चोदित: किल वर्तते ।१८½।

That which is the best fount of 'Amrit' (ambrosia or elixir of eternity, bliss and felicity)[1] available to the Gods[2] is called 'Som'[3], and it functions under my orders, authority, powers and guidance[4] (18-18½).

[1]ममृताकर:, [2]सोऽपि सञ्जीवनो नृणां देवाना, [3]सोम: स, [4]मन्नियोगेन चोदित: किल वर्तते

[Note :- The word 'Som' also means the Moon. So, Sri Ram refers to both the elixir of life as well as the Moon-God when he uses the word Som. The implication is that the celestial body moon, which is one of the manifested forms of the Gods and which is the store house of Amrit, is under the sway and authority of the Supreme Being in the form of Sri Ram, even as the personification of that Amrit in the form of Moon-God is also obedient to him.

'Som' generally refers to an invigorating drink or elixir that provides nourishment to the Gods; that Som is the drink of eternity, beatitude and felicity. It is stored in the moon like water is soaked in a sponge or stored in a glass pitcher. This is the Amrit over which the Gods and demons had fought during the legendary churning of the ocean in search of this ambrosia of life. Som is also the sanctified liquid used during fire sacrifice rituals to offer libations to the Gods. Since Amrit is infused with radiance, and it is vibrant and bubbling with divine and glorious life, the moon appears to shine in a silvery, soothing and comforting way. According to mythology, it is the Amrit that is seen in the pitcher-like moon.]

य: स्वभासा जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रकाशयति सर्वदा ।।१९।।

सूर्यो वृष्टिं वितनुते शास्त्रेणैव स्वयम्भुव: ।१९½।

That Sun[1] which always[2] keeps the entire world[3] naturally illuminated by its dazzling, bright and splendorous light[4], does produce rain[5]

on the instructions of Lord Swayambhu[6] (19-19½).

[1]सूर्यो, [2]सर्वदा, [3]जगत्कृत्स्नं, [4]स्वभासा प्रकाशयति, [5]वृष्टिं, [6]शास्त्रेणैव स्वयम्भुव:

[Note :- (i) The word 'Swayambhu' refers to the primal man represented by the creator Brahma as well as the Viraat Purush who were both born from the Lord called Narayan who is deemed to be their father. Swayambhu was the male aspect of creation, and his female counter part was Mother Nature. The word means 'someone who was born out of his own free will'. So, Viraat Purush and Brahma are generally regarded as Swayambhu, because both were born out of their own free will as a manifestation of Brahm. Please also see verse nos. 27 and 27½, and 36½ and 39½. 'Swayambhu Manu' was the first male born on earth and from him the rest of the creation was born.

The word 'Swayambhu' also means 'self existent' and refers to Brahm, while 'Swayambhu Manu' is Brahma, the Prajapati or the Lord and sustainer of the subjects of this creation; he is a representative of the Male aspect of creation, the Viraat Purush, and is primal male par excellence; he is the divine father of the human race. The name 'Manu Swayambhu' is especially applied, in the context of the Purans of which Ramayan is a part, to 14 successive mythical progenitors and sovereigns of the earth and who create and sustain this world through successive long period of time called 'Kalpas'. The first such mythical progenitor is known as 'Manu Swayambhu' (मनु स्वायम्भु) as the one who sprung (created or manifested) from the self-existent Brahm. He is regarded as a secondary creator who commenced his work of creating by producing 10 Prajapatis, of whom the first was 'Light' called Marichi. To this Manu is ascribed the celebrated code of conduct called 'Manu Smriti' and two other ancient Sutra work on Kalpa and Grihya, i.e., the sacrificial and domestic rituals. He is also known as Hiranyagarbh (हिरण्यगर्भ) and Prachetas (प्रचेता).

The other 5 Manus are called Swarochish (स्वरोश्चिष), Uttam (उत्तम), Taamas (तामस), Raivat (रैवत) and Chakshush (चाक्शुष). The 7th Manu is called Vaivasvata Manu (वैवश्वत् मनु), the son of the

Son-God, and he is regarded as the progenitor of the present race of living beings. He is like the Noah of the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, is said to have been preserved by Vishnu or Brahm in the form of the legendary great fish from being drowned in the great deluge of the dooms day. This Manu is also called as one of the 12 Adityas, the author of Rig Veda, VIII, 27-31, as the brother of Yam (the God of death and a judge of a creature's deeds done by it during the life time), as the founder and first king of Ayodhya, and as the father of Ila who married the son of the Moon-God named Budha. This makes two great dynasties —the solar and the lunar races to which Sri Ram and Krishna respectively belonged —related to each other. The 8th Manu, or the 1st of the future Manus according to Vayu Puran, III, 2, will be Savarni (सावर्णी), the 9th would be Daksha Savarni (दक्ष सावर्णी), the 10th would be Brahm Savarni (ब्रह्म सावर्णी), the 11th would be Dharma Savarni (धर्म सावर्णी) the 12th would be Rudra Savarni (रुद्र सावर्णी), the 13th would be Raviya or Deva Savarni (देव सावर्णी), and the 14th would be Bhautya or Indra Savarni (इन्द्र सावर्णी). The life of one Manu is equivalent to roughly 311,040,000 years.

(ii) The creation of 'rain by the Sun' is a very scientific phenomenon. The sun creates heat which evaporates the water from the oceans. This evaporated water goes inland with the hot air currents formed due to the heat on the land surface. Eventually, this moisture-laden wind forms the clouds which pour rain upon the earth. The sun controls this cycle of rainfall and seasons by a complex mechanism of heat, light, convection air currents, gravitational pulls, rotation of the earth on its axis and its revolution around the sun, and other such forces of nature.]

योऽप्यशेषजगच्छास्ता शक्रः सर्वामरेश्वरः ।।२०।।
यज्ञानां फलदो देवो वर्ततेऽसो मदाज्ञया ।
यः प्रशास्ता ह्यसाधूनां वर्तते नियमादिह ।।२१।।

Lord Indra, known as 'Shakra'[1], who rules over the whole creation (because he is the patron God of rains which foster life on the planet)[2] and is the Lord (king) of all the Gods[3], distributes the rewards and benefits[4] of doing various 'Yagyas' (fire sacrifices and other religious

rituals)[5] only upon my instructions, advise and authority[6] (20). Similarly, he administers punishment and restrains the unrighteous and evil ones[7] according to the rules framed by me[8] (21). [20-21]

[1]देवो शक्रः, [2]योऽप्यशेषजगच्छास्ता, [3]सर्वामरेश्वरः, [4]फलदो, [5]यज्ञानां, [6]वर्ततेऽसो मदाज्ञया यः प्रशास्ता, [7]ह्यसाधूनां [8]वर्तते नियमादिह

यमो वैवस्वतो देवी देवदेवनियोगतः ।
योऽपि सर्वधनाध्यक्षो धनानां सम्प्रदायकः ।।२२।।
सोऽपीश्वरनियोगेन कुबेरो वर्तते सदा ।
यः सर्व रक्षसां नाथस्तापसानां फलप्रदाः ।।२३।।

'Yam' (the God who decides whether the creature goes to hell or heaven depending upon the deeds done by it during its previous life; the God of death)[1], the Vaivaswat Manu[2], the different Gods[3] and Goddesses[4] —all of them function under my instructions, authority, command and guidance according to the laws and regulations that I have formulated or framed for this purpose[5]. He who is the Lord of wealth[6] and has the powers to give it to others in the society[7] (22), i.e., the patron God of wealth called Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods[8], also always exercises his powers and discretion[9] upon the express instruction of the supreme Lord, that is me[10]. He (Kuber) is the Lord of all the demons[11] and gives commensurate rewards to those who do severe Tapa (i.e., austerities and penances)[12] (23). [22-23]

[1]यमो, [2]वैवस्वतो, [3]देव, [4]देवी, [5]देवनियोगतः, [6]सर्वधनाध्यक्षो, [7]धनानां सम्प्रदायकः, [8]कुबेरो, [9]वर्तते सदा, [10]सोऽपीश्वरनियोगेन, [11]सर्व रक्षसां नाथ, [12]स्तापसानां फलप्रदाः

[Note :- (i) 'Vaivasvat or Vaivaswat Manu' is the 7th Manu and the legendary progenitor of the current living beings on this earth. See a detailed not to verse no. 19-19½ above in this Canto. The word 'Vaivaswat' means coming from the Sun or belonging to the Sun, or relating to or belonging to Yam (the God of death and a judge of a creature's deeds done by it during the life time). It also means the planet Saturn as well as one of the Rudras. In the present context of this text, Sri Ram means the Vaivaswat Manu who is the forefather of the human race in general and Sri Ram's ancestor in particular because he belongs to the Solar race.

(ii) Kuber —he is the treasure of Gods, a grand son of sage Pulastya, the elder step-brother of the demon king Ravana made famous by the story of Ramayan. Since Ravana was a king of the demon race and Kuber was his elder brother, naturally therefore Kuber is considered as the senior most amongst the demons. According to legend, Kuber was the rightful king of Lanka before Ravana got jealous of him, usurped the kingdom from his brother and even snatched his famous airplane, Pushpak, upon which Sri Ram had returned to Ayodhya after slaying Ravana at the end of the epic war at Lanka. The whole episode of the birth, acquiring of the kingdom and defeat of Kuber at the hands of Ravana have been described in 'Adhyatma Ramayan' by sage Veda Vyas in its Uttar Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 24 to Canto 2, verse no. 60. A separate English version of this Ramayan by this author has been published.]

मन्नियोगादसौ देवो वर्तते निर्ऋतिः सदा ।
वैतालगणभूतानां स्वामी भोगफलप्रदः ।।२४।।

The God called 'Niriti' (he is one of the names of Lord Shiva who is the patron God of phantoms, ghosts and spirits)[1] also always[2] performs his duties according to the principles laid down by me[3], and functions under my command and authority. He is the Lord of all the phantoms, spirits and ghosts[4], and he gives them all the rewards of the deeds done by them[5] (24).

[1]देवो निर्ऋतिः, [2]वर्तते सदा, [3]मन्नियोगादसौ, [4]वैतालगणभूतानां स्वामी, [5]भोगफलप्रदः

ईशानः सर्वभक्तानां सोऽपि तिष्ठेन्ममाज्ञया ।
यो वामदेवोऽङ्गिरसः शिष्यो रुद्रगणाग्रणीः ।।२५।।
रक्षको योगिनां नित्यं वर्ततेऽसौ मदाज्ञया ।२५½।

The great Lord who stands as the most exalted and revered symbol or emblem of devotion which all the worshippers of the supreme Lord are expected to possess[1], is called 'Ishan' (Lord Shiva)[2]. He is also established by my express command and orders and on my authority[3]. 'Vamdeo', who is the chief amongst the 11 Rudras[4], along with sage 'Angiras' accompanied by all his disciples[5], are always protective of the Yogis (ascetics)[6]. They also work and carry out their assigned duties under my instructions, command and

authority[7] (25-25½).

[1]सर्वभक्तानां, [2]ईशानः, [3]सोऽपि तिष्ठेन्ममाज्ञया, [4]वामदेवो रुद्रगणाग्रणीः, [5]ऽङ्गिरसः शिष्यो, [6]रक्षको योगिनां नित्यं, [7]वर्ततेऽसौ मदाज्ञया

[Note :- (i) The word 'Ishan' (ईशानः) has the following connotations — (i) Lord master, (ii) Lord Shiva, (iii) the north-east corner or direction of the globe, and (iv) an emblem, symbol or an insignia. (v) Here, the chief Rudra is called Ishan because he represents all the 11 Rudras, he is a symbol for all of them at once, and he is also the greatest devotee of Lord Vishnu who is now in the form of Sri Ram. Just like the situation when a king follows anyone who is senior or superior to him, by saying that Ishan, who is the chief Rudra himself, obeys Lord Sri Ram, it is implied that Sri Ram is senior to Lord Shiva and other Rudras, and all of them obey his commands. That is why Lord Shiva is also known as the first God who had composed the story of Sri Ram in his heart and narrated it to Parvati, his divine consort, when she requested him to reveal the story to dispel all doubts and misconceptions about the divinity of Sri Ram.

(ii) The name of the 11 Rudras have been given in note to verse no. 18-21 of Canto 9.

(iii) Lord Shiva is regarded as the patron God of Yogis or ascetics, hermits and recluses who spend the time in meditation and doing fire sacrifices, especially those who live around cremation grounds and rub the ash of the fire sacrificial pit on their bodies and hold a trident. Since Lord Shiva is also the annihilator and resides in the cremation ground, he is deemed to be a patron God of spirits, phantoms and ghosts, and as such is surrounded by them as described in verse no. 24 above.

(iv) Sage Angira's chief disciples are his own 3 sons—Vrihaspati, Utathya and Samvartta.]

यश्च सर्वजगत्पूज्ये वर्तते विघ्नकारकः ।।२६।।
विनायको धर्मनेता सोऽपि मद्वचनात्किल ।
योऽपि वेदविदा श्रेष्ठो देवसेनापतिः प्रभुः ।।२७।।
स्कन्दोऽसौ वर्तते नित्यं स्वयम्भूप्रतिचोदितः ।२७½।

He who is worshipped, honoured, glorified and revered by the whole world[1], is the dispeller or vanquisher of all hindrances or obstacles to success in any venture or endeavour in this world[2], and is the foremost leader of Dharma in the world (i.e., he leads those who have the virtues of righteousness, nobility and exemplary qualities)[3], is known as 'Vinayak' (Lord Ganesh who is the elephant-headed God worshipped first amongst all other Gods)[4]. He too undertakes all his functions as per the guidelines set out by me, works under my direction and supervision, and carries out my instructions under the powers delegated to him under my authority[5] (26½).

He who is an expert in the Vedas (i.e., is thoroughly versed in the tenets as laid down in the Vedas, and is therefore most wise, erudite, learned, scholarly and sagacious)[6] and is the best commander[7] of the armed forces of the Gods[8], known as God 'Skand'[9], also constantly works under the inspiration of the Lord God himself, or under the instruction and supervision and according to the powers delegated to him by the authority of Lord Swayambhu[10] (27½). [26-27½]

[1]यश्च सर्वजगत्पूज्ये, [2]वर्तते विघ्नकारकः, [3]धर्मनेता, [4]विनायको, [5]सोऽपि मद्वचनात्किल, [6]योऽपि वेदविदा, [7]श्रेष्ठो, [8]देवसेनापतिः, [9]प्रभुः स्कन्दोऽसौ, [10]नित्यं स्वयम्भूप्रतिचोदितः

[Note :- (i) 'Vinayak' (विनायक) is also known as Lord Ganesh, the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati. He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise. (ii) Lord Swayambhu has been described in detail in a note to verse nos. 19-19½ above in this Canto. (iii) The word 'Skand' refers to someone who attacks; one who jumps, leaps or hops swiftly and with agility. It also refers to Kartikeya, the son of Lord Shiva or of Agni (the Fire-God). He is called the God of War as a leader of Shiva's ghosts against the enemies of the Gods.]

ये च प्रजानां पतयो मरीच्याद्या महर्षयः ।।२८।।
सृजन्ति विविधं लोकं परस्यैव नियोगतः ।२८½।

Great sages Marichi and others[1], who are the Lords of the creation and its inhabitant creatures (or literally the masters, guardians and the guides of the subjects of the creation of Brahma, the creator)[2], carryout the functions of creating and regulating[3] the various Lokas (worlds)[4] under the powers and authority delegated to them by the supreme Lord[5]. [That is, they have been appointed by the supreme Lord, Brahm, and directed to look after the welfare of his creation. Since they have been deployed on the command of the Lord, they carryout his orders, under his name and seal, as it were.] (28-28½)

[1]मरीच्याद्या महर्षयः, [2]प्रजानां पतयो, [3]सृजन्ति नियोगतः, [4]विविधं लोकं, [5]परस्यैव

[Note :- 'Marichi' was one of the first progenitors of the creation called Prajapati. He is the patron God of light. In ancient times, those sages who conceptualised the scriptures described the various divine forces that regulated the creation by ascribing them the role of a great seer or sage. So, sage Marichi is the patron God of light and one of the 10 Prajapatis first created by Brahm and he was the forefather of creation. Like his other compatriot Prajapatis, he was responsible to look after the creation under the authority of Brahm. He was like one of the chief guardians of the subjects of Brahm, the Supreme Being and Authority of this creation.]

या व श्री सर्वभूतानां ददाति विपुलां श्रियम् ।।२९।।
पत्नी नारायणस्यासौ वर्तते मदनुग्रहात् ।२९½।

The Goddess Laxmi[1] who provides ample amounts[2] of all the worldly wealth and treasures, prosperity and welfare, pomp and pelf, majesty and glitter[3] to all the mortal beings of the world[4], and who is the divine consort of Lord Narayan (Vishnu)[5], does so because of my gracious kindness, my benevolence and my magnanimity towards the creation[6*]. (29-29½)

[1]श्रियम्, [2]ददाति विपुलां, [3]श्री, [4]सर्वभूतानां, [5]पत्नी नारायणस्यासौ, [6]वर्तते मदनुग्रहात्

*[Note :- That is, the largesse that the Goddess of wealth, prosperity and wellbeing, Goddess Laxmi, shows to the people in the form of giving away wealth, prosperity and riches leading to materialistic comfort and welfare and wellbeing of all the creatures of the world are actually my gifts for them, and I have appointed her or have delegated to her this job of benediction and magnanimity for the sake of the

creatures; she acts on my behalf; she gets what she gives because I give to her; she cannot give anything if I do not want her to give. Hence, it is 'me' (Vishnu in the form of Sri Ram and who is the Lord God and Supreme Being of this creation) who has provided Laxmi with the worldly treasures with the welfare of the human kind in view.]

वाचं ददाति विपुलां या च देवी सरस्वती ।।३०।।
सापीश्वरनियोगेन चोदिता सम्प्रवर्तते ।३०½।

That Goddess Saraswati[1], who empowers the faculty of speech[2] with ample glory, vitality, majesty, prowess and strength[3], also carries out the divine mission of the supreme Lord known as Ishwar[4]. She is inspired by him to become active, agile and potent[5]. [That is, the Goddess of wisdom, erudition and scholarship helps a man to become learned and be a good orator and teacher because I want it to be so. Goddess Saraswati cannot make anyone wise and scholarly and be renowned as an expert speaker and scholar par excellence if I do not want him to be so.] (30-30½)

[1]देवी सरस्वती, [2]वाचं, [3]ददाति विपुलां, [4]सापीश्वरनियोगेन, [5]चोदित सम्प्रवर्तते

याऽशेष पुरुषान् घोरान्नरकात्तारयत्यपि ।।३१।।
सावित्री संस्मृता देवी देवाज्ञानुविधायिनी ।३१½।

The Goddess Savitri[1], who provides liberation and deliverance[2] to countless persons[3] from a horrible hell[4] and who is remembered and invoked[5] for this aptitude and virtue, is also regulated by the edicts of the Lord God. She provides liberation and deliverance in accordance with the principles and guidelines laid down by the supreme Lord, and not according to her own sweet will or whims. She merely carries out the laws of the Lord as laid down and advised by him[6] (31-31½).

[1]सावित्री देवी, [2]त्तारयत्यपि, [3]याऽशेष पुरुषान्, [4]घोरान्नरका, [5]संस्मृता, [6]देवाज्ञानुविधायिनी

[Note :- The word 'Savitri' (सावित्री) has many connotations— (i) she is the mother of all the Vedas and the wife of Brahma, the creator, (ii) Saraswati, the Goddess of wisdom, knowledge, erudition and speech, (iii) the wife of Dharma and the daughter of Prajapati Daksha, (iv) a chaste women, (v) river Yamuna, and (vi) Mother Nature, Prakriti, personified.]

पार्वती परमा देवी ब्रह्मविद्याप्रदायिनी ।।३२।।
यापि ध्याता विशेषेण सापि मद्वचनानुगा ।३२½।

The supreme Goddess Parvati (the divine consort of Lord Shiva and regarded as the great mother of creation)[1], who has promulgated the great ordinance pertaining to the knowledge of Brahma[2], gives the necessary special rewards[3] to those who contemplate and meditate upon Brahma[4], according to my wishes and for my pleasure[5]. [That is, the rewards that one gets by doing contemplation and meditation are given to him by me, albeit through the medium of this great Goddess Parvati.] (32-32½]

[1]पार्वती परमा देवी, [2]ब्रह्मविद्याप्रदायिनी, [3]यापि ध्याता, [4]विशेषेण सापि, [5]मद्वचनानुगा

योऽनन्तो महिमानन्तः शेषोऽशेषामरः प्रभुः ।।३३।।
दधाति शिरसा लोकं सोऽपि देवनियोगतः ।३३½।

Lord Sheshnath (the legendary hooded python on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu, the Viraat Purush, reclines on the celestial ocean of milk called Kshirsagar)[1], whose stupendous and magnificent glory, potentials, majesty and fame[2] has no end or measure[3] and who is also the eternal and supreme Lord of all the Gods[4], carries the burden of the earth[5] on his hoods or head[6] also on the instructions and directions of the supreme Lord, because the Lord has appointed him for the job of carrying aloft the earth on his head and preventing it from drowning in the celestial ocean[7] (33-33½).

[1]शेषो, [2]महिमानन्तः, [3]ऽनन्तो, [4]ऽशेषामरः प्रभुः, [5]दधाति लोकं, [6]शिरसा, [7]सोऽपि देवनियोगतः

योऽग्निः संवर्तको नित्यं वडवारूपसंस्थितः ।।३४।।
पिबत्यखिलमम्भोधिमीश्वरस्य नियोगतः ।३४½।

That annihilating eternal fire[1] called 'Vadva'[2] that always burns under the entire ocean (i.e., is always present in the ocean bed and keeps the water warm)[3], literally devours or drinks[4] it under the command and authority of the great Lord[5] (34-34½).

[1]योऽग्निः संवर्तको, [2]वडवारूप, [3]नित्यं संस्थितः, [4]पिबत्यखिलमम्भो, [5]नियोगतःधिमीश्वरस्य

[Note :- The great fire burning on the floor of the ocean, a reference to the underground volcanic activity that occasionally erupts as spouts of hot gas escaping from the ocean bed as well as the innate fire present in the bosom of the earth in its core, keeps the water of the ocean or the sea always warm

and it heats it up sufficiently enough to make it evaporate constantly. Otherwise, with all the rivers flowing and pouring themselves into the ocean or the sea, they would have risen in volume and over the centuries would have submerged the land mass by now. The existence of this under-ocean or under-sea fire is evident in the warmth of the water deep under the surface of the ocean or the sea as it sustains a complete ecosystem of marine creatures even though the surface may be frigid cold and solidified as glaciers and icebergs.]

आदित्या वसवो रुद्रा मरुतश्च तथाश्विनी ।।३५।।
अन्याश्च देवता: सर्वा मच्छासनमधिष्ठिता: ।३५½।

Aditya (the Sun-God), Vasus (the patron Gods of various forms of wealth that sustain material life on this earth), Rudra (the various forms of Shiva), Maruts (the different Wind-Gods) Ashwini Kumars (the medicine men of the Gods) and all other Gods are invariable subjected to my reign and authority. That is, all the Gods stay regulated by me[1] (35-35½).

[1]मच्छासनमधिष्ठिता:

[Note :- (i) The names of the Adityas, Rudras and Vasus are given in Canto 9, verse no. 18-21. (ii) The various Maruts have been described in Canto 12, verse 18 and its note. (iii) Ashwini Kumars are the two sons of the Sun-God; their mother was Prabha 'प्रभा' who is the daughter of Twasta 'त्वष्ट'. They are doctors for the Gods.]

गन्धर्वा उरगा यक्षा: सिद्धा: साध्याश्च चारणा: ।।३६।।
भूतरक्ष: पिशाचाश्च स्थित: शास्त्रे स्वयम्भुव ।३६½।

'Gandharvas' (celestial musicians), 'Urags' (the legendary serpents and other reptiles), 'Yakshas' (demi-Gods who guard the treasure of Kuber, the treasurer of Gods), 'Siddhas' (mystics, the attained ones), 'Chaarans' (celestial bards and minstrels), 'Bhuts' (ghosts, phantoms and spirits), 'Rakshasas' (the non-Gods; demons), 'Pishaachs' (devil, ogres, evil phantoms and vampires, spooks, Satan, fiends) —all of them are under the control and command[1] of Lord Swayambhu[2] (36-36½).

[1]शास्त्रे, [2]स्वयम्भुव

[Note :- Lord Swayambhu has been described in detail in a note to verse nos. 19-19½ of this Canto.]

कलाकाष्ठानिमेषाश्च मुहूर्ता दिवसा: क्षणा: ।।३७।।
ऋत्वब्दमासपक्षाश्च स्थित: शास्त्रे प्रजापते ।
युगमन्वन्तराण्येव ममतिष्ठन्ति शासने ।।३८।।

The various sections or fractions of time, such as 'Kalaa'[1] (a measurement of time equivalent to 30 Kashta or 12960 seconds = 231 minutes), 'Kastha'[2] (a period of time of 18 Puls, where 1 Pul = 24 seconds; hence 432 seconds, or 7.2 minutes), 'Nimesh'[3] (the time taken for the involuntary blinking of the eyelid; an instant, a fraction of a second), 'Muhurt'[4] (the 30th part of a day), 'Diwas'[5] (the day time; 12 hours), 'Kshana'[6] (moment), the different seasons, the month and the years, a period of 15 days of the lunar cycle called 'Paksha'[7], 'Yug'[8] (an era or age), 'Manwantar'[9] (a period of seventy one 4-era cycles, each cycle having the 4 eras called Sat, Treta, Dwapar and Kali Yugs; a period equivalent to 14th part of one day of Brahma, the creator) — all of them are regulated and controlled by my authority and are administered by me[10] (37-38).

[1]कला, [2]काष्ठा, [3]निमेषाश्च, [4]मुहूर्ता, [5]दिवसा:, [6]क्षणा:, [7]ऋत्वब्दमासपक्षाश्च, [8]युग, [9]मन्वन्तराण्येव [10]ममतिष्ठन्ति शासने

[Note :- In brief it signifies that whatever his happening in any point of time in this creation, whether that time is as small as a fraction of a second or as unimaginably huge as a Manwantar and Kalpas, everything is regulated by the supreme Lord. The various seasons, the days and the nights, the cycle of the moon and the revolution of the earth around the sun to mark the year—all are controlled by the Lord.]

पराश्चैव परार्द्धाश्च कालभेदास्तथापरे ।
चतुर्विधानि भूतानि स्थावराणि चराणि च ।।३९।।
नियोगादेव वर्तते सर्वाण्येव स्वयम्भुव: ।
पतनानि च सर्वाणि भुवनानि च शासनात् ।।४०।।

The supernatural realm of the transcendental entity[1] that extends to virtual infinity as well as the period of time which is equivalent to half the life of Brahmaa[2], all the different aspects of time or circumstances[3], all the 4 forms of the mortal creatures[4], all the

inanimate[5] and animate[6] world —each and everyone of them is controlled and regulated[7] by Lord Swayambhu (described in note of verse no. 19½). Everything acts or moves[8] according to his wishes and orders and as directed by him[9]. The nether world (or the lower, subterranean world)[10] and all other worlds[11] obey his inviolable orders and are under his administration, command and control. All obey him without fail[12] (39-40).

[1]पराश्चैव, [2]परार्द्धश्च, [3]कालभेदा, [4]चतुर्विधानि भूतानि, [5]स्थावराणि, [6]चराणि च, [7]नियोगा, [8]देव स्वयम्भुवः, [9]वर्तते सर्वाण्येव, [10]पतनानि, [11]सर्वाणि भुवनानि, [12]शासनात्

[Note :- The 4 types of creatures mentioned in verse no. 39 are the following —(i) 'Andaj' (those born from an egg, e.g., birds; (ii) 'Swadej' (those born from sweat and dampness, e.g., bacteria, fungi and lice; (iii) 'Udbhij' (those born from seeds, e.g., plants; and (iv) 'Jarayuj' (those born from an embryo inside the womb, e.g., a man).]

ब्रह्माण्डानि च वर्तते देवस्य परमात्मनः ।
अतीतान्यप्ससंख्यानि ब्रह्माण्डानि मदाज्ञया ।।४१।।
प्रवृत्तनि पदार्थौघैः सहितानि समं ततः ।
ब्रह्माण्डानि भविष्यन्ति सह वस्तुभिरात्मगैः ।।४२।।

Innumerable endless universes[1] work under the command and control of that Supreme Being called Parmatma (literally, the supreme, transcendental Soul; but here also meaning the stupendous forces of nature which regulate everything that exists)[2]. All the universes have their own characteristic features, their own basic elements in their myriad forms, in different and multiferious permutations and combination, and have their own ecosystems[3]. (But they work and are controlled by that singular authority called Parmatma) (42).

[1]अतीतान्यप्ससंख्यानि ब्रह्माण्डानि, [2]देवस्य परमात्मनः, [3]सह वस्तुभिरात्मगैः प्रवृत्तनि पदार्थौघैः सहितानि

[Note :- Modern science has established that our solar system is not the only one and neither the earth the only one of its kind. There are countless number of galaxies in the cosmos, each galaxy having its own ecosystem of stars and their planets. The process of creation and destruction is continuously going on

with some old stars dying thousands of light years away and newer ones are under formative stages somewhere else. It is such a great wonder that our ancient sages who composed the epics as well as the Vedas, Upanishads and Purans could envision such stupendous phenomena in their minds without the benefit of complex scientific gadgetry.]

हरिष्यन्ति सहैवाज्ञां परस्य परमात्मनः ।
भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।।४३।।
भूतादिरादिप्रकृतिर्नियोगान्मम वर्तते ।४३½।

All of them accept and carryout most cheerfully and gladly the orders and commands of the supreme Lord.[1] The elements such as the earth, water, fire, wind and space or sky[2] (which are called the gross body of the creatures in this creation) as well as the 'Mana' (mind)[3], 'Buddhi' (intellect)[4] and 'Prakriti' (the natural habits, temperaments and inclinations)[5] of a creature (which together form its subtle and causal body)[6] are all subject to my authority and command. They do their assigned duties as I have appointed them to carry on with the routine work of the creation independently, without my day to day interference[7] (43-43½).

[1]हरिष्यन्ति सहैवाज्ञां परस्य परमात्मनः, [2]भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं रेव, [3]मनो, [4]बुद्धि, [5]प्रकृति, [6]भूतादि, [7]रादिर्नियोगान्मम वर्तते

याऽशेषसर्वजगतां मोहिनीं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।।४४।।
मायापि वर्तते नित्यं सापीश्वरनियोगतः ।४४½।

'Maya'[1], the factor in creation that creates delusions and deceptions leading to hallucinations and misconceptions about the Truth, thereby trapping[2] the entire world[3] and its inhabitants (i.e., the mortal creatures)[4] in its net, also constantly works under the orders and command[5] of the supreme Lord[6]. [That is, Maya has been delegated these powers to create delusions and illusions under the authority of the Lord. The Lord thought it necessary to have these negative traits in this creation, because they were needed to counter balance the positive virtues. Both the negative and the positive, the bad and the good, were necessary to make the world a composite whole.] (44-44½)

[1]मायापि, [2]मोहिनीं, [3]याऽशेष सर्वजगतां, [4]सर्वदेहिनाम्, [5]वर्तते नित्यं नियोगतः, [6]सापीश्वर

[Note :- The concept of 'Maya' has been described in detail

as a note to verse no. 35 canto 25 of this book]

विधूय मोहकलिलं यथा पश्यति तत्पदम् ।।४५।।
सापि विद्या महेशस्य नियोगाद्वशवर्तिनी ।
बहुनात्र किमुक्तेन मम शक्त्यात्मकं जगत् ।।४६।।

That by which 'Moha' (i.e., ignorance and delusions leading to hallucinations, bewilderments, infatuations and attachments, misconception and deception about the Truth and Reality) is dispelled[1] and the supreme and truthful reality is perceived and realised[2], is known as 'Vidya' (i.e., truthful knowledge, erudition, wisdom, sagacity and enlightenment)[3]. This Vidya also functions under the command and control[4] of the great Lord known as Mahesh (literally, the great Lord Shiva)[5]. What is the use of saying much[6], this whole world is empowered by me, is driven by me, is enabled by me, is activated and moved by me, and is an embodiment or image of my stupendous potentials and magnificent majesty[7] (45-46).

[1]विधूय मोहकलिलं, [2]पश्यति तत्पदम्, [3]सापि विद्या, [4]नियोगाद्वशवर्तिनी, [5]महेशस्य, [6]बहुनात्र किमुक्तेन, [7]मम शक्त्यात्मकं जगत्

मयैव पूर्यते विश्वं मयैव प्रलयं ब्रजेत् ।
अहंहि भगवानीशः स्वयंज्योतिः सनातनः ।।४७।।

This whole world attains its zenith of accomplishment by my grace[1], and it is in me that it finally dissolves or merges[2] into (see also Canto 15, verse no. 7). I am the one who is known as Lord 'Ish'[3] or Ishwar (the causal body of vedanta) who is self illuminated, radiant, splendorous and glorious[4] as well as eternal, universal and truthful[5] (47).

[1]मयैव पूर्यते विश्वं, [2]मयैव प्रलयं ब्रजेत्, [3]अहंहि भगवानीशः, [4]स्वयंज्योतिः, [5]सनातनः

परमात्मा परंब्रह्म मत्तो ह्यन्यन्न विद्यते ।
इत्येतत्परमं ज्ञानं भवेत कथितं मया ।।४८।।

I am Parmatma, the supreme, transcendental, cosmic soul of creation[1]. I am the supreme Brahm[2]. No one is superior to or greater than me[3]. I have told you (Hanuman) the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality as it stands[4] (48).

[1]परमात्मा, [2]परंब्रह्म, [3]मत्तो ह्यन्यन्न विद्यते, [4]परमं ज्ञानं कथितं

ज्ञात्वा विमुच्यते जन्तुर्जन्म संसारबन्धनात् ।

मायामाश्रित्य जातोऽहं गृहे दशरथस्य हि ।।४९।।

By having this supreme knowledge[1], a creature is freed[2] from the fetters of birth (and death) that this world of artificiality creates for him to tie him down to it[3]. I have taken a birth in the household of Dasrath under the spell and influence of Maya[4] (as defined in verse no. 44 above and in verse no. 35 of canto 25 of this book)*.(49)

[1]ज्ञात्वा, [2]विमुच्यते जन्तुं, [3]जन्म संसारबन्धनात्, [4]मायामाश्रित्य जातोऽहं

*[Note :- Though I am the enlightened Supreme Being of this creation and am beyond any taint, blemish and reproach, when I decided to reveal myself in a visible form as a human being, I had to take the recourse of deceptions so as to hide my true identity and assume a physical form of a man with all its incumbent faults, flaws and shortcomings. But what you see is an illusionary form of the truthful supreme Brahm. Further, if the supremely enlightened Being that is me can be affected by Maya, there is no wonder than that an ordinary man is effected by the stupendous powers of Maya. It is not his fault that he is under its spell, but he should endeavour to overcome it by trying to understand the truth behind the façade of deception and try to achieve to realisation of his true self, his Atma through the process of Yoga (meditation) as elucidated by me in canto 14. If he achieves success in doing so, he would deem to have broken the fetters that tie him down to this artificial and illusionary mundane world, and to have achieved deliverance and liberation from its shackles.]

रामोऽहं लक्ष्मणो ह्येष शत्रुघ्नो भारतोऽपि च ।
चतुर्धा सम्प्रभूतोऽहं कथितं तेऽनिलात्मज ।।५०।।
मायास्वरूपं च तव कथितं यत्प्लवङ्गम ।
कृपया तद्धृदा धार्य न विस्मर्तव्यमेव हि ।।५१।।

I have[1] manifested or revealed myself and assumed 4 forms[2] known as Ram, Laxman, Shatrughan and Bharat. All these 4 physical forms are none other than 'me'. These are all my illusionary or deceptive forms[3]. Oh the son of the Wind-God[4]! Whatever I have told you, please keep it in your heart with respect and devotion[5], and do not ever forget it[6] (50-51).

[1]ऽहं, [2]चतुर्धा सम्प्रभूतोऽहं, [3]मायास्वरूपं, [4]ऽनिलात्मज, [5]यत्प्लवङ्गम कृपया तद्धृदा

धार्य, [6]न विस्मर्तव्यमेव

येनायं पठ्यते नित्यं संवादो भवतो मम ।
जीवन्मुक्तो भवेत्सोऽपि सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।।५२।।

Those who would daily read this conversation[1] between me (extending from Canto 11 to Canto 14) would be freed from the fetters of this mundane life to become liberated and emancipated, i.e., they would become 'Jivan Mukta'[2]. They would also get rid of all their sins and misdeeds (i.e., they will be able to overcome the evil effects of these misdeeds and misdemeanours)[3] (52).

[1]येनायं पठ्यते नित्यं संवादो, [2]जीवन्मुक्तो, [3]भवेत्सोऽपि सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते

[Note :- The word 'Jivan Mukta' means that such persons will become emancipated even thought they are still living in this world. They would become enlightened, wise and realised, and Maya or delusion and ignorance would no more have any effect on them.

The concept of 'Jivan Mukta' has been described by other scriptures in the following way— (a) According to Brihad Aranakya Upanishad, 4/4/7, 'यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः । अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ।।', 'When all the desires present in one's heart are eliminated, then such a mortal being becomes immortal and attains Brahm in this body itself why he is still alive'; (b) According to Vivek Chudamani, 543, 'निर्धनोऽपि सदा तुष्टोऽप्यसहायो महाबलः । नित्यतृप्तोऽप्यभुञ्जानोऽप्यसमः समदर्शनः ।।', 'A Jivan Mukta person is one who remains ever contented though he has no riches; he is very strong, potent and powerful though helpless and without support; he is perpetually satisfied though he does not enjoy the sense objects of comfort in this world; he treats everyone equally though he is without an exemplar'; (c) According to Vivek Chudamani, 544, 'अपि कुर्वन्नकुर्वाणश्चाभोक्ता फलभोग्यपि । शरीर्यप्यशरीर्येष परिच्छिन्नोऽपि सर्वगः ।।', 'A Jivan Mukta person is he who remains inactive (uninvolved) though doing everything; he remains untouched by the fruits of past actions though witnessing and experiencing them (i.e., he remains unaffected and unruffled); he does not identify himself with his body though he possess one'; (d) According to Laghu (minor) Yog Vashistha, 5/93 'रागद्वेषभयादीनामनुरूपं चरन्नपि । योऽन्तर्व्योमवदत्यच्छः स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते ।।', 'He is

called a Jivan Mukta who, though buffeted by such emotions as love, hate, fear and the like, remains unaffected and pure and spotless in his heart as the sky'. The concept has also been explained in detail by Sri Ram to Hanuman in canto 1 of Muktikopanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. This Upanishad's English version is included in this author's book 'an anthology of Sri Ram's Upanishads'].

श्रावयेद्वा द्विजाञ्छुद्धान्ब्रह्मचर्यपरायणान् ।
यो वा विचारयेदर्थं स याति परमां गतिम् ।।५३।।

Those who narrate it or preach about it[1] to Brahmins (or learned and wise people) who observe Brahmacharya,[2] or those who contemplate upon and discuss about the profound meaning and import of my discourse for you[3], shall attain the supreme and most exalted end that a creature can expect to acquire, a state called 'Param Pad' which is tantamount to having emancipation and salvation[4] (53).

[1]श्रावयेद्वा, [2]द्विजाञ्छुद्धान्ब्रह्मचर्यपरायणान्, [3]विचारयेदर्थं, [4]परमां गतिम्

[Note :- The word 'Brahmacharya' (ब्रह्मचर्य) here refers to self restraint, abstinence from indulgences and leading a regulated life. The term is usually used to define the first phase of life when a man is a student, studying the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise and learned teacher. Those who are grown up but remain steadfast and resolute in their vows of keeping self restraint on passions, worldly pursuits and various indulgences, they are also deemed to be Brahmacharis following the principles of Brahmacharya, although they might be living the life of a householder. This Brahmacharya infuses a man with divine energy and he becomes eligible and competent to pursue spiritual and religious life which is quite different from the materialist and sensual life of this mundane materialistic world. Such persons are only eligible to learn about the supreme Truth of existence, about the Atma and supreme Brahm, for otherwise they will only subject these great principles to ridicule and scorn.]

यश्चैतच्छृणुयान्नित्यं भक्तियुक्तो दृढ़व्रतः ।
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तो ब्रह्म लोके महीयते ।।५४।।

Those who would listen to it daily[1] with devotion, reverence and sincerity[2] as well as with firm faith and steadfast conviction[3] shall become freed from the tarnish of all sins and misdeed[4]. They shall attain the supreme abode of Brahm in the heaven, called Brahm Loka (after death)[5] (54).

[1]यश्चैतच्छृणुयान्नित्यं, [2]भक्तियुक्तो, [3]दृढ़वतः, [4]सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तो, [5]ब्रह्म लोके महीयते

[Note :- We must note that this type of emancipation and salvation in which the devotee reaches Brahm Loka is different from the one mentioned in verse no. 52 when he becomes 'Jivan Mukta'. Verse no. 53 says that such a person attains the Param Pad, which is the most exalted stature of attaining the holy, divine and august feet of the Supreme Being. While Jivan Mukta is a person who is still alive but has become enlightened and emancipated, after death he attains Param Pad of the Lord in the Brahm Loka.The different types of Muktis (emancipation and salvation) have been elaborately described by Sri Ram to Hanuman in Muktikopanished of Shukla Yajur Veda]

तस्मात्सर्वप्रत्येन पठितव्यो मनीषिभिः ।
श्रोतव्यश्चापि मन्तव्यो विशेषाद्ब्राह्मणैः सदा ।।५५।।

That is why, those who are learned, wise, sagacious and enlightened[1] should make all efforts to read and study and preach and discuss my discourse[2] and contemplate upon it[3]. Brahmins (the wise and learned people)[4] should specially pay attention to it and hear it with devotion, conviction and faith[5] (55).

[1]मनीषिभिः, [2]तस्मात्सर्वप्रत्येन पठितव्यो, [3]मन्तव्यो, [4]विशेषाद्ब्राह्मणैः, [5]श्रोतव्यश्चापि सदा

Thus ends Canto 14 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the concluding part of Sri Ram's preaching to Hanuman in which the Lord describes his supreme, transcendental, sublime divine form as the almighty Authority in creation.

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Canto 15
Hanuman's prayer to Sri Ram

In this Canto, sage Valmiki describes the glorious Stotras, the devotional hymns that Hanuman had composed extempore to honour and prey to his Lord Sri Ram. The prayer in essence sums up the glories of Sri Ram in his primary form as Brahm, the macrocosmic supreme and transcendental Being and Lord of the creation. It also summarises what Sri Ram himself has described about his eclectic, sublime and transcendental form in the previous canto nos. 11-14. These prayerful hymns contain elements of devotion as well as metaphysics, theology, spiritualism and Vedanta.

Prayers or hymns are mental thoughts that sprout spontaneously in the heart and mind of a devotee. They express his emotions and thoughts. Sincere prayers are those that come from the heart as well as from the mind, thereby having the elements of both in them —sentimental emotions and intelligent thoughts. According to Adi Sankaracharya, the hymns or Mantras are 'Sankalps' (thoughts) of the mind because they are said exactly as they appear in the mind with the formation of a particular set of words that form the text of the prayer said in a particular accent and pitch of the voice, and with a particular effort.

ध्यात्वा हृदिस्थं प्रणिपत्य मूर्ध्ना बद्धाञ्जलिर्वायुसुतो महात्मा ।
ओंकारमुच्चार्य विलोक्य देवमन्तः शरीरे निहितं गुहायाम् ।।१।।

The great son of the Wind-God[1] meditated upon[2] the divine form of Sri Ram in his heart[3] and reverentially bowed his head before him[4]. He joined his hands[5], invoked the divine word OM[6] and beheld[7] the Lord[8], who resides secretly and subtly in the cave-like dwelling of the heart of a creature (his devotees)[9], standing in front of him (1).

[1]वायुसुतो महात्मा, [2]ध्यात्वा, [3]हृदिस्थं, [4]प्रणिपत्य मूर्ध्ना, [5]बद्धाञ्जलि, [6]ओंकारमुच्चार्य, [7]विलोक्य, [8]देव, [9]अन्तः शरीरे निहितं गुहायाम्

रामं महात्मानम कुण्ठशक्तिं सनन्दमुख्यैः स्तुतमपमेयम् ।
तुष्टाव च ब्रह्ममयैर्वचोभिरानन्दपूर्णयतमानसः सन् ।।२।।

The great and exalted Sri Ram[1] has immeasurable powers, potentials and strengths[2], is worshipped, adored, lauded and honoured by great sages, lead by Sanand as their chief[3], who sing the glories of the Lord[4] who is 'Aprameya' (i.e., is endless, measureless, boundless, without parameter and beyond definition)[5]. Hanuman praised the glories of the Lord most cheerfully and full of joy and exhilaration[6], with complete devotion in his heart, so much so that he became completely absorbed in it (i.e., while he was saying the prayers, he was submerged in a surge of devotion for the Lord)[7]. He used sublime, eclectic and divine words used to honour and pray to Brahm while he prayed to the Lord Sri Ram (i.e., while he prayed to Sri Ram, he treated him as Brahm)[8] (2).

[1]रामं महात्मानम, [2]कुण्ठशक्तिं, [3]सनन्दमुख्यैः, [4]स्तुत, [5]ऽप्रमेय, [6]आनन्दपूर्ण, [7]पूर्ण यतमानसः, [7]तुष्टाव च ब्रह्ममयैर्वचोभिरा

त्वामेकमीशं पुराणं प्राणेश्वरं राममनन्तयोगम् ।
नमामि सर्वान्तरसन्निविष्टं प्रचेतसं ब्रह्ममयं पवित्रम् ।।३।।

'You are the only Lord who is supreme and exalted[1]. You are the one who is lauded, honoured and glorified by the Purans[2] as the Lord of all life and souls[3]. Oh Sri Ram, you are eternal and without an end; you are an embodiment of umpteen number of Yogas[4]. You are established or enshrined in the bosom of all the creatures[5]. You are the most exalted and pure conscious Brahma[6]. You are most pure, holy and uncorrupt[7]. I bow to you most reverentially[8] (3).

[1]त्वामेकमीशं, [2]पुराणं, [3]प्राणेश्वरं, [4]राममनन्तयोगम्, [5]सर्वान्तरसन्निविष्टं, [6]प्रचेतसं ब्रह्ममयं, [7]पवित्रम्, [8]नमामि

पश्यन्ति त्वां मुनयो ब्रह्मयोनि दान्ताः शान्ता विमलं रुक्मवर्णम् ।
ध्यात्वात्मस्थमचलं स्वे शरीरे कवि परेभ्यः परमं परञ्च ।।४।।

Sages, seers and hermits perceive you as a manifestation of Brahma[1]. You are a magnanimous and a benevolent benefactor of all[2]. You are peaceful, serene and tranquil[3]; are pristine pure, uncorrupt, without any blemishes or taints whatsoever, and most holy[4]; and you are radiant, splendorous and glorious (Rukma)[5]. You are established in the eternal Atma (soul or spirit) residing inside the body of a creature[6], and you are supreme and transcendental, most sublime and subtle[7]. Learned 'Kavis' (literally poets, but here

meaning those bards who are skilled, learned, adroit and wise in the scriptures and the essentials of Vedanta while they pray to you) concentrate, meditate and contemplate upon you (i.e., they sing your glories through their compositions which are not only poetically beautiful but also highly intellectually evolved and devotionally vibrant and succulent)[8] (4).

[1]पश्यन्ति त्वां मुनयो ब्रह्मयोनिश [2]दान्ताः, [3]शान्ता, [4]विमलं, [5]रुक्मवर्णम्, [6]आत्मस्थमचलं स्वे शरीरे, [7]परेभ्यः परमं परञ्च, [8]कवि ध्यात्वा

[Note :- The word 'Rukma' 'रुक्म' literally means golden coloured. Here it means that Sri Ram's glories and virtues are glowing and radiant like the glow of pure gold. The virtues and attributes of the Lord are as pure as the purest form of gold.]

त्वतःप्रसूता जगतःप्रसूति सर्वातमसृष्टेः परमाणुभूत : ।
अणोरणीयात्महतोमहीयांस्त्वामेव सर्वे प्रवदन्ति सन्तः ।।५।।

It is from you that the whole cosmos is created[1]. You are the Atma (soul/spirit) of all that exists[2]. You are the basic, elementary and primary ingredient upon which this whole structure of this creation is founded, i.e., you are the minute and subtle atom which is innately present in the entire structure of the cosmos as its integral part, and without which there would be no structure at all which could be called a 'cosmos'[3]. Those who are saintly, pious, holy, wise, erudite, sagacious and adroit[4] regard you as being the most subtle and microscopic entity as well the one who is most huge, colossus, infinite and having a macrocosmic form[5] (5).

[1]त्वतःप्रसूता जगतःप्रसूति, [2]सर्वातमसृष्टेः, [3]परमाणुभूतः, [4]सर्वे प्रवदन्ति सन्तः, [5]अणोरणीयात्महतोमहीयांस्त्वामेव

हिरण्यगर्भो जगदन्तरात्मा त्वत्तोऽधिजातः पुरुषः पुराणः ।
स जायमानो भवता विसृष्टो यथाविधानं सकलं ससर्ज ।।६।।

You are 'Hiranyagarbh'[1], the 'Atma' (cosmic soul) of the entire cosmos[2] and the great 'Purush' (the Viraat; the primal male aspect of nature)[3] lauded, glorified and honoured by the Purans (the mythological ancient history of the Hindus)[4]. It is from you that the whole world has been born[5]. It is from you that 'he' (Purush; the Viraat or the primal Male) has been born[6] who then produced the

rest of the world[7] and laid down the basic laws and regulations to govern its proper functioning[8] (6).

[1]हिरण्यगर्भो, [2]जगदन्तरात्मा, [3]पुरुषः पुराणः, [4]त्वत्तोऽधिजातः, [5]स जायमानो भवता, [6]विसृष्टो सकलं ससर्ज, [7]यथाविधानं

[Note :- 'Hiranyagarbh' was the primordial cosmic egg or embryo from which Viraat Purush, the first macrocosmic male aspect of creation was born. Please see Canto 14, note to verse no. 9 for elaboration. In terms of Vedanta, Hiranyagarbh represented the sum total of all the 'subtle bodies' present in the cosmos.

(ii) The 'spark of life' present in this cosmic egg at the macro level was called Parmatma, which is also the same as the Atma present at the micro level in the individual creature.

(iii) The 'Purush' or Lord Vishnu mentioned by the Purans refers to the Viraat Purush of Vedanta who was born from Hiranyagarbh, and he was the sum total of all the cosmic 'gross bodies' present in it. His counterpart was the individual 'male' creature on the earth. The word 'Viraat' means vast, infinite, measureless, huge, colossus and all inclusive. The entire creation was incorporated in the form of this Purush. As to how colossus and all encompassing he was, Sri Ram has himself given its glimpse to Hanuman in Canto 10, verse no. 12-18.

(iv) At the micro level of creation, the 'Purush', who was the first primal male from whom the human beings were born, was called 'Manu' (see also verse no. 18 of this Canto and note to verse no. 19-19½ of Canto 14). He laid down the principles that would act like a constitution for the entire living beings in a treatise called 'Manu Smriti' which outlines the general codes of moral and ethical behaviour and to serve as a guideline for Manu's offspring, the human race, to live a civilised and a regulated life as opposed to the life of a savage.

(v) A separate appendix no. 3 to this book outlines the entire Vedantic concept of such principles as the different bodies of a creature, the concept of Atma, Brahm etc. as well as the micro and macrocosms in lucid and simple

language with the help of sketches.]

त्वत्तो वेदाः सकलाः सम्प्रतेवृत्तास्त्वय्येवान्ते संस्थिति लभन्ते ।
पश्यामि त्वां जगतो हेतुभूतं नृत्यं तं स्वे हृदये सन्निविष्टम् ।।७।।

The Vedas have been created by you[1] (see this Canto, verse no. 15 also); it is in you that everything that exists find its ultimate rest (see Canto 14, verse no. 2)[2]. I find or see[3] that you are the basic cause or the primary source of the entire creation[4]. You are always present (i.e., enshrined and honourably established) in my heart[5] (7).

[1]त्वत्तो वेदाः सकलाः सम्प्रतेवृत्ता, [2]स्त्वय्येवान्ते संस्थिति लभन्ते, [3]पश्यामि, [4]त्वां जगतो हेतुभूतं, [5]नृत्यं तं स्वे हृदये सन्निविष्टम्

त्वयैवेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रं मायावी त्वं जगतामेकनाथः ।
नमामि त्वां शरणं सम्पद्ये योगात्मानं चित्पति दिव्यनृत्यम् ।।८।।

You are the one who revolves the universal wheel of creation[1]. You are the mystical maverick Lord[2] who is the only Master of the world[3]. I most reverentially bow to you and take your refuge and seek shelter at your august feet[4]. You are an embodiment and the soul or spirit of Yoga[5]. You are the Lord of pure consciousness and awareness[6]. You are a divine manifestation who plays or stages the cosmic dance (of creation and destruction)[7] (8).

[1]त्वयैवेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रं, [2]मायावी, [3]त्वं जगतामेकनाथः, [4]नमामि त्वां शरणं सम्पद्ये, [5]योगात्मानं, [6]चित्पति, [7]दिव्यनृत्यम्

पश्यामि त्वां परमाकाशमध्ये नृत्यन्तं ते महिमानं स्मरामि ।
सर्वात्मानं बहुधा सन्निविष्टं ब्रह्मानन्दमनुभूयानुभूय ।।९।।

I perceive you as being constantly present in the center of the great sky[1]. [That is, you are established as the dazzling and splendorous Sun in the sky of the universe, illuminating the realm and dispelling darkness of ignorance; symbolically you are present in the sky of the heart of a creature, removing the darkness of ignorance present in his heart.] By remembering your majestic glories and great virtues[2] as the one who is the Soul or Atma of all that exists[3], and who is supreme and exalted in all respects[4], I feel a surge of supreme bliss and beatitude, of joy and felicity of having witnessed or experienced Brahm[5], in my heart (9).

[1]पश्यामि त्वां परमाकाशमध्ये, [2]ते महिमानं स्मरामि, [3]सर्वात्मानं, [4]बहुधा सन्निविष्टं, [5]ब्रह्मानन्दमनुभूयानुभूय

ओंकारस्ते वाचको मुक्तिबीजं त्वमाक्षरं प्रकृतौ गूढरूपम् ।
त्वं त्वां सत्यं प्रवदन्तीह सन्तः स्वयंप्रभं भवतो यत्प्रकाशम् ।।१०।।

The cosmic word OM is the divine incantation which is an acronym for you[1] as well as is the seed which can give the fruit of emancipation and salvation[2]. You have a sublime and subtle presence in a secret mode[3] in every alphabet of the language or in each of the alphabets that make up this word OM. You are by nature imperishable; it is your inherent and innate secret quality[4]. Sages, saints, seers and hermits describe this as your truthful form[5]. You are self-illuminated and radiant with the incandescent splendour of your glory and majesty[6] (10).

[1]ओंकारस्ते वाचको, [2]मुक्तिबीजं, [3]गूढरूपम्, [4]त्वमाक्षरं प्रकृतौ, [5]त्वं त्वां सत्यं प्रवदन्तीह सन्तः, [6]स्वयंप्रभं भवतो यत्प्रकाशम्

[Note :- OM is an acronym as well as a synonym for Brahm. It consist of 3 letters— A, U, M, which encompass in their ambit the entire creation, from its very beginning to its conclusion. OM is also called 'Naad', the cosmic vibration that generates energy that produces 'fire', and to counter this fire, the 'water' was produced. The letter 'A' represent the waking state of consciousness, the letter 'U' the dreaming state, and the letter 'M' the deep sleep state of consciousness respectively. The silence that follows after the pronunciation of the divine word OM, when the mouth closes, is the 4th state of consciousness called 'Turiya'. This is the state of utter and complete bliss.]

स्तुवन्ति त्वां सततं सर्वदेवा नमन्ति त्वामृषयाः क्षीणदोषाः ।
शान्तात्मानःसत्यसन्धं वरिष्ठ विशन्ति त्वां यतयो ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः ।।११।।

All the Gods[1] constantly, consistently and persistently[2] pray and pay their obeisance to you, sing your glories and laud your virtues[3]. Those sages who have no faults and blemishes in them, who are pure, uncorrupt and clean[4], bow reverentially before you[5]. Great and senior ascetics and hermits who are steadfast in their thoughts of Brahm (i.e., who are always engrossed in, or firmly rooted in the thoughts of Brahm, are persistent and resolute in it, who contemplate, meditate upon and pursue the supreme and absolute Truth)[6] find their

last and final rest in you (i.e., they merge their Atma with you as the culmination of their spiritual pursuits in order to obtain emancipation and salvation)[7]. You are the calm, peaceful and blissful Atma[8]. You are the focal point of all that is truthful and real[9] (11).

[1]सर्वदेवा, [2]सततं, [3]स्तुवन्ति त्वां, [4]वरिष्ठ मृषयाः क्षीणदोषाः, [5]नमन्ति त्वा, [6]यतयो ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः, [7]विशन्ति, [8]शान्तात्मानः, [9]सत्यसन्धं

एको वेदो बहुशाखो ह्यनन्तस्त्वामेवैकं बोधयत्येकरूपम् ।
संवेद्यं त्वां शरणं ये प्रसन्नास्तेषां शान्तिःशाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ।।१२।।

The Vedas are essentially one[1] but they have many branches, classifications, names and usage[2]. The Veda essentially enlightens the creature about your form (Sri Ram's divine form as Brahm) that is eternally, immutably and indivisibly one and unique[3] (although the different versions of the Vedas describe different aspects of your single form in various and different ways as perceived and understood from different perspectives or angles by different sages and seers. That is, though there are 4 Vedas, many sub-Vedas etc., but when one delves deep into them and seeks their ultimate preaching in its purest crystalline form, all the scriptures describe only one immutable and indivisible ultimate Truth and Reality, and that is Brahm, the Lord God, the Supreme Being. The imagery, the circumstance, the time and era may be very different from one version to another, but all of them point to a single central point that resembles the hub or axle of the wheel where the spokes are the numerous scriptures and the circumference is the all encompassing and all enveloping knowledge about the Truth— see also canto 13, verse no. 15). Only those who take shelter and refuse in your august and holy feet[4] which are worthy of being sought[5], get eternal and stable[6] peace, tranquility and happiness as well as beatitude and felicity[7]. No one else gets this privilege[8]. [That is, only those who have sincere and steady devotion for you can really hope to get peace; there is no other alternative to it.] (12)

[1]एको वेदो, [2]बहुशाखो, [3]ह्यनन्तस्त्वामेवैकं बोधयत्येकरूपम्, [4]त्वां शरणं, [5]संवेद्यं, [6]शाश्वती, [7]शान्तिः, [8]प्रसन्नास्तेषां, [9]नेतरेषाम्

भवानीशोऽणिमादिमांस्तेजोराशिर्ब्रह्मविश्वं परमेष्ठी वरिष्ठः ।
आत्मानन्दं चानुसूयानुशेते स्वयंज्योतिर्वचनो नित्यमुक्तः ।।१३।।

You are the Lord of Bhavani (i.e., you are also Lord Shiva, because Bhavani is another name for Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva)[1]. You possess the mystical powers such as 'Anima' etc.[2]. You are a fount of radiant and splendorous energy[3]. You are the supreme Brahm[4] who pervades the entire universe[5]. You are 'Paramesthi' (i.e., Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva or the Trinity Gods, as well as are the Fire-God who represent the vital spark of life and the energy that drives the cosmos)[6]. You are most exalted and Supreme Being who is superior to all of them at once (because each one of them is only one fraction of your complete self)[7]. You are the Atma which is in a perpetually eternal blissful state[8]. You are self-illuminated and radiant with an incandescent energy and splendour effusing from you[9]. You have revealed your glories by your own words (as in Canto nos. 11-14)[10]. You are eternally liberated and free from being shackled to any of the delusions present in this creation[11] (13).

[1]भवानीशो, [2]ऽणिमादिमांस्ते, [3]तेजोराशि, [4]ब्रह्म, [5]विश्वं, [6]परमेष्ठी, [7]वरिष्ठः, [8]आत्मानन्दं चानुसूयानुशेते, [9]स्वयंज्योति, [10]र्वचनो, [11]नित्यमुक्तः

[Note :- There are 8 mystical powers or accomplishment called 'Siddhis' mentioned in this verse. They are the following— (i) 'Anima' 'अणिमा' means the power to become microscopic so that one becomes invisible to the naked eye; (ii) 'Mahima' 'महिमा'is to have majesty, glory and fame; (iii) 'Garima' 'गरिमा' is to have weight, stature, dignity, gravity and significance, (iv) 'Laghima' 'लघिमा' is to have simplicity and humility; (v) 'Praapti' 'प्राप्ति' is to be able to attain or obtain anything wished or desired; (vi) 'Prakramya' 'प्राक्रम्य' is to have valour, strength, powers, prowess, potential and punch; (vii) Ishwata 'ईश्वत्व' is to be able to have lordship or sway over others, and (viii) 'Vashitwa' 'वशित्व' is to be able to control and subdue others.]

एको देवस्त्वं करोषीह विश्वं त्वं पालयस्यखिलं विश्वरूपः ।
त्वय्येवास्ते विलयं विन्दतोदं नमामि त्वां शरणं त्वां प्रपन्नः ।।१४।।

You are the only Lord[1] who pervades uniformally in this whole universe[2] (see also Canto 14). You are the Lord who takes care, protects, sustains and nourishes it[3]. At the end, the universe merges and dissolves in you[4] (see also Canto 13, verse no. 18 and canto

14, verse nos. 6 and 47). I (Hanuman) have taken shelter in you holy, divine and august feet[5] and I most reverentially bow before you to pay my obeisance[6] (14).

[1]एको देव, [2]स्त्वं करोषीह विश्वं, [3]त्वं पालयस्यखिलं विश्वरूपः, [4]त्वय्येवास्ते विलयं, [5]त्वां शरणं त्वां प्रपन्नः, [6]विन्दतोदं नमामि

त्वामेकमाहुः परमं च रामं प्राणं बहन्तं हरिमित्रमीशम् ।
इन्दुं मृत्युमनलं चेकितानं धातारमादित्यमनेकरूपम् ।।१५।।

Oh Sri Ram! You are the one who bestows life or blesses one with the boon of life[1]. You are the one who is called the supreme, sublime, subtle and transcendental entity (Brahm)[2]. You are Hari (Vishnu), Mitra (a friend) and Isha (Lord)[3]. [That is, you are the supreme life giving Lord who sustains, nourishes, protects and helps the world like a friend, and you are at the same time the Lord of it.] You are the one who has assumed many different forms[4] such as the Moon[5], Death[6], Anil (fire)[7], Chekitan (a wise and intelligence person; Lord Mahadev or Shiva)[8], Dhata (Brahma, the creator; one of the principal Wind-Gods called 'Pran')[9] and Aditya (sun)[10] (15).

[1]प्राणं बहन्तं, [2]परमं, [3]हरिमित्रमीशम्, [4]अनेकरूपं, [5]इन्दुं, [6]मृत्यु, [7]ऽनलं, [8]चेकितानं, [9]धाता, [10]आदित्य

त्वमक्षरं परमं बेदितव्यं त्वमस्य विश्वसय परं निधानम् ।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतो धर्मगोप्ता सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषोत्तमोऽसि ।।१६।।

You are the supreme imperishable One who is worth knowing about[1]. You are the ultimate resting place for the entire creation[2]. It is you who never decays or perishes[3], are stable, eternal, unchanging, and universal[4], are a protector of 'Dharma' (righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility of thought and conduct and virtuousness)[5], are ancient, eternal and infinitely truthful[6], and are the most exalted person in existence[7] (16).

[1]त्वमक्षरं परमं बेदितव्यं, [2]त्वमस्य विश्वसय परं निधानम्, [3]त्वमव्ययः, [4]शाश्वतो, [5]धर्मगोप्ता, [6]सनातनस्त्वं, [7]पुरुषोत्तमोऽसि

त्वमेव विष्णुश्चातुराननस्त्वं त्वमेव रुद्रो भगवानपीशः ।
त्वं विश्वनाभिः प्रकृतिः प्रतिष्ठा सर्वेश्वरस्त्वं परमेश्वरोऽसि ।।१७।।

You are the one who is also known as Vishnu and Chaturanan, the 4-headed Brahma (i.e., these two Gods are none other than your manifestations in their respective forms)[1]. You are Rudra and Lord

Isha (i.e., Shiva, the Lord God all of the Gods)[2]. You are the central focal point or hub or literally the 'navel' of the universe[3]. You are Mother Nature called 'Prakriti' personified[4]. You are majestic, famed, dignified and firmly established[5] Lord of all that exists[6]. You are the supreme, transcendental Ishwar or Lord God[7] (17).

[1]त्वमेव विष्णुश्चतुरानन, [2]रुद्रो भगवानपीशः, [3]त्वं विश्वनाभिः, [4]प्रकृतिः, [5]प्रतिष्ठा, [6]सर्वेश्वरस्त्वं, [7]परमेश्वरोऽसि

त्वामेकमाहुः पुरुषं पुराणमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
चिन्मात्रमव्यक्तमचिन्त्यरूपं खं ब्रह्मशूत्यं प्रकृति निर्गुणं च ।।१८।।

You are the ancient primal 'Purush' mentioned by the Purans[1] (see also verse no. 6). You are one and the only one[2]. You are glorious like the sun[3]. You are beyond the darkness called 'Tam' (representing ignorance, delusions, evils, misdeeds and perversions of all kinds)[4]. You are enlightened and wise[5]. You are without any attributes and descriptions and you cannot be either seen or explained[6] because you are beyond the reach of perception, comprehension and understanding[7]. You are 'Kha' (representing the fathomless void of space or sky; the tube in the throat through which a man breathes —the trachea; a spot; the mouth of the cosmos or the hole; the world; Brahma the creator who pronounced the primary words at the beginning of creation)[8]. You are Brahm (the sublime, supreme transcendental Being who is pure consciousness, pure Truth and absolute Reality)[9]. You are the void of space or sky (i.e., you are vast, measureless, infinite and fathomless like the sky; you are pure, spotless and clean like the sky)[10]. You are 'Prakriti' personified (i.e., you are Mother Nature as well as the inherent habits, temperaments and tendencies of a creature that are his innate nature)[11]. You are 'Nirgun' (i.e., you have no Gunas or attributes and qualities that can be comprehended or measured)[12] (18).

[1]पुरुषं पुराण, [2]त्वामेकमाहुः, [3]मादित्यवर्णं, [4]तमसः परस्तात्, [5]चिन्मात्र, [6]ऽव्यक्त, [7]ऽचिन्त्यरूपं, [8]खं, [9]ब्रह्म, [10]शूत्यं, [11]प्रकृति, [12]निर्गुणं

यदन्तरा सर्वमिदं विभाति यदव्ययं निर्मलमेकरूपम् ।
किमप्यचिन्त्यं तव रूपमेकं यदन्तरा यत्प्रतिभाति तत्त्वम् ।।१९।।

Your divine, subtle, eclectic and sublime form, in whose bosom this

whole world glows with incandescence[1], a form which is imperishable and non-decayable[2], is crystal and pristine pure[3]. It is one, without a second, immutable, indivisible and uniform[4]. It is a subject that is beyond comprehension and purview of the mind and intellect[5]. It is illuminated, radiant, splendorous, efflorescent and incandescent with glory and majesty[6] (19).

[1]यदन्तरा सर्वमिदं विभाति, [2]यदव्ययं, [3]निर्मल, [4]एकरूपम्, [5]किमप्यचिन्त्यं, [6]यत्प्रतिभाति तत्त्वम्

योगेश्वरं रूपमनन्तशक्तिं परायण ब्रह्मतनुं पवित्रम् ।
नमाम सर्वे शरणार्थिनस्त्वां प्रसीद भूताधिपते प्रसीद ।।२०।।

He who is the Lord of Yogis (ascetics and hermits)[1], has a fame that is without any beginning or end (i.e., Sri Ram's fame is eternal)[2], is endowed with immeasurable and indefinable 'Shakti' (energy majesty, powers, strength, potentials, abilities, stamina, prowess, agility and valour)[3], is a manifestation of the supreme Brahma[4], is most holy, crystal clean, pristine pure, untainted and unadulterated[5] —all of us (your devotees) bow before and pay our deepest obeisance and reverence to the Lord of all the creatures (i.e., Sri Ram)[6]; we most humble seek refuge in his holy, divine and august feet[7]. Be gracious and benevolent upon us; be pleased with us[8], oh Lord (20).

[1]योगेश्वरं, [2]रूपमनन्त, [3]अनन्तशक्तिं परायण, [4]ब्रह्मतनुं, [5]पवित्रम्, [6]नमाम सर्वे भूताधिपते, [7]शरणार्थिनस्त्वां, [8]प्रसीद

त्वत्पादपद्मस्मरणादशेषं संसारबीजं विलयं प्रयाति ।
मनो नियम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादयाम्येकरसं भवन्तम् ।।२१।।

By remembering your lotus-feet[1], all the seeds (root causes) that give rise to this mundane, artificial and entrapping world[2], such as the cycle of transmigration, are destroyed or eliminated[3]. [That is, by having devotion in Sri Ram's holy feet, one gets liberation from the continuous cycle of births and deaths, thereby finding deliverance from this bondage represented by the world of birth and death together with its accompanying sorrows, pains and torments.] By restraining the 'Mana' (mind, intellect and heart)[4] and exercising control over the body[5], I concentrate myself, mentally and bodily, to focus my attention on worshipping and praying to you, in having undiluted and sincere devotion for you, and to honour you with my

whole being as one single unit, with both my mind and body involved in your worship[6] (21).

[1]त्वत्पादपद्मस्मरणा, [2]संसारबीजं, [3]विलयं प्रयाति, [4]मनो नियम्य, [5]प्रणिधाय कायं, [6]प्रसादयाम्येकरसं भवन्तम्

नमोऽस्तु रामाय भवोद्भवाय कालाय सर्वकहराय तुभ्यम् ।
नमोऽस्तु रामाय कपर्दिने ते नमोऽग्नये दर्शय रूपमग्यम् ।।२२।।

I reverentially bow to you, Sri Ram[1], who is the primary cause of creation of the entire world[2]. You are the one who has himself created it[3]. You are like the death God personified for the ultimate annihilation or conclusion of the creation originally created by you[4]. You are the one who can vanquish all and everything[5]. I bow reverentially before you, Sri Ram[6], who are a personification of both the 'fire element', or you are Fire-God personified[7], and Lord Shiva or Rudra, called Kapardin[8]. You have countless forms[9]' (22).

[1]नमोऽस्तु रामाय, [2]भवोद्, [3]भवाय, [4]कालाय, [5]सर्वकहराय, [6]नमोऽस्तु रामाय, [7]नमोऽग्नये दर्शय, [8]कपर्दिने, [9]रूपमग्यम्

ततः स भगवान् रामो लक्ष्मणेन सह प्रभुः ।
संहृत्य परमं रूपं प्रकृतिस्थोऽभवत्स्वयम् ।।२३।।

When Hanuman prayed to Sri Ram as above, the Lord concealed[1] his divine, supreme and transcendental macrocosmic sublime, holy and divine form[2] along with that of Laxman, and reverted back to his earlier form as a normal human being[3] (23).

[1]संहृत्य, [2]परमं रूपं, [3]प्रकृतिस्थो

स तस्य स्तवमाकर्ण्य वायुपुत्रश्च धीमतः ।
प्राह गम्भीरया वाचा हनूमन्तं रघूत्तमः ।।२४।।

When Sri Ram heard what the son of the Wind-God (Hanuman) had to say, he emphatically said to him in a serious voice— (24).

स्तोष्यन्ति येऽनया स्तुत्या ते यास्यन्ति परां गतिम् ।
स्थिरो भव हनूमंस्त्वं कार्यमोपायिकं कुरु ।।२५।।

'Those who pray to me and honour me[1] by using these Stotras (devotional hymns that Hanuman had used to honour the Lord)[2] will be able to attain the ultimate end which is called 'Paramgati' or the supreme stature where the soul of the individual merges with the supreme Soul of the Lord[3]. [This state is called the final and

ultimate Mukti or emancipation and salvation.] Oh Hanuman! Be steady and unwavering in your path and be committed in your devotion; don't be callous and nonchalant towards it; don't falter or waver from it[4]. Be resolute and firm in your conviction. Work cleverly, skillfully and adroitly[5]' (25).

[1]स्तुत्या, [2]स्तोष्यन्ति, [3]यास्यन्ति परां गतिम्, [4]स्थिरो भव, [5]कार्यमोपायिकं कुरु

Thus ends Canto 15 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the prayers of Hanuman in honour of Sri Ram.

——*—*

Canto 16
Slaying of the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka and Sri Ram's coronation at Ayodhya

This single Canto covers the conventional story of the latter half of Ramayan in one single swipe. It outlines the important events in a staccato, rapid-fire style without going into the details. It covers Sri Ram's friendship with the monkey king Sugriv, the slaying of his elder brother Bali who was an arch rival of Sugriv, the collection of the monkey army and Sri Ram's departure for Lanka, the construction of the bridge over the ocean and landing of Sri Ram's army on the shores of Lanka, the killing of the 10-headed Ravana along with his demon army, and the enthroning of Vibhishan as the king of Lanka, and finally the return of Sri Ram to Ayodhya, along with Sita who had been earlier abducted by this Ravana, and his happy coronation as its king.

This very brief outline diverges from other versions of Ramayan in the following important points besides brevity— (a) Sri Ram requests Hanuman to befriend him to Sugriv instead of Hanuman suggesting this friendship, and (b) Laxman jumped angrily into the ocean when the latter did not pay heed to Sri Ram's pleadings to let his army cross it. Laxman's vehement wrath made the ocean boil, causing turmoil for the marine creatures. Sri Ram, ever the merciful Lord, reproached Laxman and refilled the ocean

with the tears which Sita had shed during her tormenting days in captivity at Lanka. Another fascinating aspect is that the two brothers, Sri Ram and Laxman had mounted on the backs of Hanuman and Angad respectively during the course of the entire journey from Kishkindha right up to the shores of the ocean. This mode of transport has also been described by sage Veda Vyas in his own epic 'Adhyatma Ramayan', an English version of which has been published separately by this author, but this transport has not been mentioned by saint poet Tulsidas in his much popular rendering of the epic as 'Ram Charit Manas'. Besides this, no details have been mentioned here as to how Ravana's other brother, Kumbhakaran, and his son Meghanad were killed by Sri Ram. The war at Lanka has been completely skipped. Perhaps, the aim of the author of this book, sage Valmiki, was to skip those events which he had already described in great detail in his renowned epic, 'the Ramayan', and narrate only those events which had not found any mention in it, such as the remaining half of the story from canto 17 to 27 that follow.

रामः प्रत्याह च पुनर्हनूमन्तं महाद्युतिः ।
रक्षसा मे हृता भार्या रावणेन दुरात्मना ।।१।।

Then Sri Ram said to Hanuman once again, 'Oh Mahavir (literally, the most brave, strong, valiant, powerful and courageous one)! The wicked hearted, evil and pervert[1] Ravana has abducted my wife slyly (1).

[1]दुरात्मना

सुग्रीवेण रामं सख्यं कारयाद्य प्लवङ्गम् ।
हसित्वा मधुरं वीरो हनूमानब्रवीद्वचः ।।२।।
तव भार्या महाभाग रावणेन हृतेति यत् ।
विश्वं यथेदमाभाति तथेदं प्रतिभाति मे ।।३।।

Oh exalted monkey! Befriend me with Sugriv'. Then the brave Hanuman smiled sweetly and said (2), 'Oh great Lord! Your wife has been apparently abducted by Ravana (the 10-headed king of Lanka) —this is what the world thinks[1] and this is what I am also aware of (as far as my information is concerned)[2] (3). [2-3]

[1]विश्वं यथेदमाभाति, [2]तथेदं प्रतिभाति मे

[Note :- Hanuman uses the word 'Abhas' 'आभाति' which literally means something which appears to be true, something of which one is aware of but does not know for certain whether it is a fact or the truth. The implied meaning of what Hanuman says is 'I know your true, supreme, all-pervading, omnipotent transcendental form; I know that Sita is your divine consort, the supreme Goddess Laxmi; I know that no power on this earth can ever dare to abduct that divine Goddess who has manifested herself as Sita. So this abduction is a trick played by you yourself because of your powers to create delusions called Maya. Actually, she hasn't been stolen at all, and you don't need anyone's help to retrieve her. You can do it yourself'.]

तथापि प्रभुणादिष्टं कार्यमेव हि किंकरैः ।
इत्युक्त्वा हनूमांस्तूर्ण प्रसन्नेनान्तरात्मना ।।४।।
आरोप्य स्कन्धयोर्वीरौ सुग्रीवान्तिकमानयत् ।
तौ दृष्ट्वा पुरुषव्याघ्रो सुग्रीवो वानरोत्तमः ।।५।।

However, whatever you have ordered, it is the duty of your servants or subordinates to carry them out without asking questions'. Saying this, Hanuman felt highly privileged, honoured and exhilarated in his heart[1] (4). He made the two brave brothers sit on his shoulders[2] and brought them swiftly to where Sugriv was. The most exalted amongst the monkeys, or the excellent monkey named Sugriv[3] saw them (the two brothers) who were like lions amongst mankind (i.e., Sri Ram and Laxman were like emperors amongst men; they were brave, courageous, strong, bold, robust and possessed all qualities like that of the king of the jungle, the lion)[4] (5). [4-5]

[1]प्रसन्नेनान्तरात्मना, [2]स्कन्धयोर्वीरौ, [3]वानरोत्तमः, [4]पुरुषव्याघ्रो

वालिनं तं जितं मेने प्राप्तां मेनेरुमां स्त्रियम् ।
सख्यं चकार रामेण दिष्ट्यादिष्ट्येति चा ब्रवीत् ।।६।।

Seeing them, Sugriv felt reassured and convinced mentally that he is sure to get back his lost wife Ruma and obtain victory over (his arch arrival and elder brother) Bali. He praised his good fortune and cheerfully and gladly made friends with Sri Ram (6).

[Note :- The selfish character of Sugriv has come to the fore here. He did not make friends with Sri Ram out of any empathy or sympathy for him, and neither because he realised that Sri Ram was the divine Lord and it was his profound luck that Sri Ram had selected him to be the chosen one to help him fight the war on his behalf. He had befriended Sri Ram exclusively because he had a strong desire to settle scores with his brother Bali, and he thought that Sri Ram was the most appropriate backing that he had needed so much.]

वालिनो विलयं कृत्वाराज्यं चास्मै निवेद्य च ।
नानादेश्यान्वा नरांश्च आनाय्य रघुनन्दनौ ।।७।।

After Bali was killed and Sugriv crowned (on the throne of Kishkindha), Raghunandan (Sri Ram; literally, the son of Raghu's clan) summoned all the monkeys from all the countries in all the corners/directions of the world (7).

हनूमदङ्गदारूढौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ।
सिन्धौस्तटं तौ ययतु: सग्रीवेण स प्रभु: ।।८।।

Riding on the backs (or shoulders) of Hanuman and Angad respectively, the two brothers Sri Ram and Laxman, accompanied by Sugriv (and his army), came to the shore of the ocean (8).

पारेसमुद्रं लङ्का च निरूप्याह रघूत्तम: ।
वानरा हि यथा यान्ति लङ्कालक्ष्मण तत्कुरु ।।९।।

Finding out that Lanka was across the ocean on its other side, the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) instructed, 'Oh Laxman! Find out a way by which all of us, along with the army of monkeys, can reach Lanka' (9).

रामस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा समुद्रं प्राह लक्ष्मण: ।
सिन्धोस्त्वं स्तम्भयात्मानं यथा यास्यन्ति वानरा: ।।१०।।

Hearing the words of Sri Ram, Laxman requested the ocean, 'Oh Ocean! Hold yourself, literally, control yourself and make yourself steady, or make yourself rigid and stiff[1] so that the monkeys can get across your surface (by walking over it)[2]' (10).

[1]सिन्धोस्त्वं स्तम्भयात्मानं, [2]यथा यास्यन्ति वानरा:

सिन्धुस्तु प्रभुणाष्टिं न सुश्राव यदा ।
तदा लक्ष्मण: क्रोधसदीप्त: पपाताब्धेर्जलान्तरे ।।११।।

तद्देहवहिशिखाया शुशोष जलघेर्जलम् ।
यादांसि स्थलभजीनि देवा भीता दिशोऽद्रवन् ।।१२।।

When the ocean paid no attention to what the Lord said, Laxman glowed with anger and lit up furiously[1]. He jumped into the water of the ocean[2] (11) and began to dry it up (literally, 'soak' the water or 'evaporate' it with the tremendous heat generated from his body like an immersion heater on being immersed in a bucket of water not only heats the water but makes it boil and eventually evaporate)[3]. With the fierce fire of his burning anger which made his body red hot like charcoal (or like an immersion heater used to warm water in the household)[4], all the marine creatures became extremely agitated and perturbed[5]. Even the Gods became terrified at the prospects of the ocean drying up, and they panicked and ran away helter-skelter in every direction in total disarray[6] (12). [11-12]

[1]क्रोधसदीप्त:, [2]पपाताब्धेर्जलान्तरे, [3]शुशोष जल, [4]तद्देहवहिशिखाया, [5]जलम् यादांसि स्थलभजीनि, [6]देवा भीता दिशोऽद्रवन्

तद्दृष्ट्वा महदाश्चर्य वानरा विस्मयं गता: ।
हाहाकारं प्रचक्रुस्ते सर्वे लोकांश्चराचरा: ।।१३।।

Seeing the fantastic, wonderful and unprecedented spectacle[1], the monkeys were extremely astonished, mystified and spell bound[2]. There was a panicked and terrifying tumult[3] all around in both the animate as well as the inanimate worlds[4] (i.e., both the living creatures as well as the non living ones, or both the moveable and immovable creature of the creation, such as humans, animals etc. as well as plants and mountains felt threatened as if the dooms day had finally arrived) (13).

[1]महदाश्चर्य, [2]विस्मयं, [3]हाहाकारं, [4]लोकांश्चराचरा:

ऋषयो भूतसङ्घाश्च स्वस्तिस्वस्तीति चाब्रुवन् ।
राघवो लक्ष्मणं प्राह नैतद्युक्तं त्वया कृतम् ।।१४।।
पुनरेनं पूरयामि सीताविरहयेन वै ।
अश्रुणेति प्रतिज्ञाय तं तथापूरयत्प्रभु: ।।१५।।

All the sages and seers[1] accompanied by all the creatures of the world[2] pleaded for mercy and kindness, begging for their welfare and wellbeing[3]. Anguished and sorry for the upheaval and unwarranted torments created for the world, Sri Ram politely admonished Laxman,

saying 'you have not done the right thing[4]. Now I shall refill the ocean[5] by the tears shed by Sita (during her tormenting days of separation from me)[6]'. With these words, the Lord refilled the ocean[7] with the tears (of Sita) as promised[8] (14-15).

[1]ऋषयो, [2]भूतसङ्घाश्च, [3]स्वस्तिस्वस्तीति, [4]नैतद्युक्तं त्वया कृतम्, [5]पुनरेनं पूरयामि, [6]सीताविरहयेन वै अश्रुणेति, [7]तथापूरयत्प्रभु:, [8]प्रतिज्ञाय तं

[Note :- This is the reason why the ocean has become sour and salty. Earlier, it was not so, but the tears shed by Sita mingled with the sweet waters of the ocean, converting the entire body of water into its present salty form.]

रामोपरि तदाकाशत्पुष्पवृष्टि: पपात ह ।
लोकाश्च सुस्थिता आसंश्चिन्तयित्वा पुन: पुन: ।।१६।।

Flowers rained down upon Sri Ram from the heavens (as a mark of thanksgiving by the Gods and to express their gratitude as well as to show honour to Sri Ram for his kindness, magnanimity and mercy as well as for his compassionate and gracious nature of not allowing Laxman to dry up the ocean, and instead refilling it with the tears of Sita even at the cost of his losing his chance of crossing the waters with his army, thereby putting the safely of Sita at peril)[1]. The entire world felt reassured and it recovered its earlier composure[2]. It repeatedly pondered over the whole episode (and marveled at the laudable and honourable and gracious nature of the Lord in being so merciful and compassionate towards the creation so as to ensure that no one suffers because of him)[3] (16).

[1]तदाकाशत्पुष्पवृष्टि:, [2]लोकाश्च, [3]आसंश्चिन्तयित्वा पुन: पुन:

[Note :- The world repeatedly wondered at the merciful nature of Sri Ram. It was awed and deadpanned by the fact that Sri Ram refilled the ocean when he saw that the creatures were horrified and suffered by the fierce boiling of the waters of the ocean by the wrath of Laxman. He even snubbed his own brother who was trying to help him. He put the welfare of the world first and his own interest of retrieving Sita by crossing the ocean as well as the temerity of the ocean to remain stubborn and defy the Lord's request as secondary. Under ordinary circumstances, Sri Ram should have been pleased with Laxman to have given the ocean his

due; but no, the merciful Lord is so tender hearted that he could not allow the marine creatures to suffer, suffocate and die just in order to serve his own purpose of crossing the water of the ocean at any cost. Any other army commander would have been glad if the ocean had actually dried up; but it is not so with Sri Ram.]

सिन्धुना संस्तुतो राम: सेतुं सिन्धौ वबन्ध ह ।
लङ्कायां रावणं हत्वा सगणं मधुसूदन: ।।१७।।

Then the ocean prayed to Sri Ram in humility. Thereafter, Madhusudan (Sri Ram) constructed a bridge over it (ocean), went to Lanka and killed (the 10-headed demon) Ravana along with his companions (17).

आरोप्य पुष्पके सीतां विभीषणसहायवान् ।
अयोध्यामागमद्राम: सुग्रीवहनूमदादिभि: ।।१८।।

Then he (Sri Ram) got aboard the air plane called Pushpak along with Sita, Vibhishan and others. The company departed for Ayodhya accompanied also by Sugriv, Hanuman and others. (18).

[Note :- Though not mentioned specially, Laxman obviously had also accompanied Sri Ram back to Ayodhya.]

आनन्दैर्योजयामास भ्रातन्मातृश्च बान्धवान् ।
राजा सर्वस्य लोकस्य प्रजानामनुरञ्जन् ।।१९।।

Upon his return, he provided happiness to his brothers (Bharat and Shatrughan), mothers (Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi) and his compatriots, peers, kith and kin as well as his subjects. He became renowned as an Emperor who gave cheer to the entire world, the kings who ruled over the land under him as well as the subjects who lived in the realm (19).

रामं राजानमासाद्य तिर्यञ्चोऽपि ययुर्मुदम् ।
देवदुन्दुभयो नेदु: सर्वदा हि नभस्तले ।
ववृषुर्जलदा: काले पुष्पवृष्टि: पपात च ।।२०।।

Even the animals and birds were ecstatic and exhilarated on having Sri Ram as their Emperor King. There was a constant playing of kettle drums by the Gods in the sky (as a token of continuous atmosphere of joyous celebration and festivities). There were rains at the proper time (i.e., there was no drought, everywhere there

was prosperity marked by abundance of rains and fertile soil, good crops and wellbeing), and flowers rained down ever so often from the sky (20).

Thus ends Canto 16 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing briefly the killing of 10-headed Ravana and Sri Ram’s coronation as the Emperor King of Ayodhya and the consequent perpetual all round happiness everywhere.

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Canto 17
Sita unfolds the story about the senior 1000-headed Ravana in the court of Sri Ram

This is a fascinating canto marking the beginning of the real story of this book ‘Adbhut Ramayan’ in which Sita describes to the assembled sages the incident of her childhood when a wandering Brahmin, who was on his way to a pilgrim site, was well travelled and knew about many things from many corners of the world, including about the 1000-headed Ravana, had made a stopover at her father's place. Janak, her father, had deputed the young Sita to serve the Brahmin. He had told her about that Ravana. This Ravana was the senior one and was the elder brother of the 10-headed Ravana who was his younger sibling and the king of Lanka. The elder Ravana ruled in an island known as Pushkar. Sita told them about the existence of this senior Ravana because the sages had assembled in the royal court of Sri Ram after his coronation to honour him for his victory at Lanka, glorify his achievements of killing the 10-headed Ravana and lauding generously his glories. Sita in essence meant to snub them that what Sri Ram achieved at Lanka was not worthy of so much praise, glorification and eulogising. This shows, in effect, that the sages were merely flattering Sri Ram as sweet-talking sycophants. This Canto acts as a prelude to the next half of this fascinating and wonderful version of the story of the Ramayan which now describes the Great War between Sri Ram

and this senior 1000-headed Ravana of Pushkar as unfolded in the subsequent Cantos.

प्राप्तराज्यस्य रामस्य राक्षसानां क्षये कृते ।
आजग्मुर्मुनयस्तत्र राघवं प्रति नन्दितुम ।।१।।

When the evil demons of Lanka had been killed and Sri Ram had been crowned as king emperor, all the senior sages and seers had come to the royal court of Sri Ram at Ayodhya to honour him (1).

विश्वामित्रो यवक्रीतो रैभ्यश्च्यवन एव च ।
कण्वश्च मुनिशार्दूलो ये पूर्वा दिशमाश्रिताः ।।२।।

All the sages and seers who lived in the eastern direction of Ayodhya, such as Vishwamitra, Yavakrit, Raibhya, Chyawan and Kanwa, who were considered as being the lion amongst their peers, came there (2).

स्वस्त्यात्रेयश्च नमुचोऽरिमुचोगस्त्य एव च ।
आजग्मुर्मुनस्तत्र ये श्रिताः दक्षिणां दिशम् ।।३।।

From the south direction came sages Swasti, Aatreya, Namuch, Arimuch and Agastya (3).

उपगुः कामठो धूम्रो रौद्राश्वो मुनिपुङ्गवः ।
आजग्मुर्मुनयस्तत्र ये प्रतीचीं समाश्रिताः ।।४।।

From the western direction came the exalted sages Upagu, Kaamath, Dhumra, Raudrashwa and Aajamgnu (4).

शिष्योपशिष्यसहिता वसिष्ठाप्रमुखार्षयः ।
आजग्मुहिं महात्मानं उत्तरां दिशमाश्रिताः ।।५।।

From the north arrived sages Vashistha and others along with their senior disciples and their junior ones (5).

प्राप्यते तु महात्मानो राघवस्य निवेशनम् ।
गृहीत्वा फलमूलानि हुताशसमविग्रहाः ।।६।।
राघवं प्रतिनन्द्याथ विविशुः परमासने ।६½।

All the great souls (sages and seers) came to the palace of Raghav (Sri Ram) and accepted his welcoming gesture by taking fruits and flowers. They prayed their respects to Raghav who was radiant and glorious like a splendours fire[1]. They all simultaneously honoured him[2]. All of them took their seats at a high place specially designated

for special and respected guests[3] (6-6½).

[1]हुताशसमविग्रहाः, [2]प्रतिनन्द्याथ, [3]परमासने

राघवश्च महातेजाः सीतया सह सुव्रतः ।।७।।
भ्रातृभिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्द्धं पौरैः श्रेणिमुखैस्तथा ।
विनीत उपसङ्गम्य पूजयामास तान्मुनीन् ।।८।।

Sage Valmiki said to sage Bharadwaj who was listening to the story from the sage, 'Oh the righteous one[1]! The most glorious and radiant Raghav (Sri Ram)[2] met those sages politely with due reverence and showing great respect to them[3]; he was joined by Sita, his brothers, ministers and all the senior citizen of the city (who had assembled in the court for the occasion) to welcome them with humility, and they worshipped the sages together[4] (7-8).

[1]सुव्रतः, [2]राघवश्च महातेजाः, [3]विनीत, [4]पूजयामास

अगस्त्यप्रमुखा विप्रा दिष्ट्यादिष्ट्यैति चाब्रुवन ।
राघवं प्रशशंसुस्ते मुनयो वाग्विदां वराः ।।९।।

Those sages who were articulate speakers and expert orators[1], led by sage Agastya[2], were very pleased and exhilarated in their hearts. They thanked him (Sri Ram) profusely for his welcoming gestures[3]. They lauded the glories of Raghav (Sri Ram) and praised him[4] (9).

[1]वाग्विदां वराः, [2]अगस्त्यप्रमुखा, [3]दिष्ट्यादिष्ट्यैति, [4]राघवं प्रशशंसुस्ते

त्वं हि देवो जगन्नाथो जगतामुमकारकः ।
रावणस्य सपुत्रस्य सामात्यस्य वधात्प्रभो ।।१०।।
जगदेतन्महाबाहो पुनर्जातमिवाभवत् ।
न रावणादभ्यधिको दुष्टो लोकभयंकरः ।।११।।

They said, 'Oh Lord Jagganath (literally, the Lord of the world)[1]! You are a benevolent benefactor of the world[2]. Oh Lord[3]! By the death of the 10-headed Ravana along with his sons[4] and ministers[5], it appears that the world has got a fresh lease of life, or has got a new life altogether, as it were[6]. There was no one more wicked, evil, pervert[7], fearful and horrifying[8] for this world than the evil and wicked[9] Ravana (10-11).

[1]देवो जगन्नाथो, [2]जगतामुमकारकः, [3]प्रभो, [4]सपुत्रस्य, [5]सामात्यस्य, [6]पुनर्जातमिवाभवत, [7]भ्यधिका, [8]लोकभयंकरः, [9]दुष्टो

दशास्यैर्दशदिक्कार्यमाज्ञापयति राक्षसः ।

स दशास्यो हतो राम दिष्ट्या च जगदुद्धृतम् ।।१२।।

This demon's orders were obeyed in all the 10 directions of the world (i.e., he was never disobeyed by anyone anywhere). Fortunately, by slaying him, you have liberated the world from his cruelty, viciousness and torments (12).

भगवानसि भूपाल ब्रह्मणाभ्यर्थितः पुरा ।
पुण्डरीकविशालाक्षः श्याम आजानुबाहुकः ।।१३।।

You have manifested yourself as the protector and sustainer of the earth (i.e., you have become a king or Bhupal)[1] on the prayers or request of Brahma, the creator, made in some ancient time. Your eyes are large like the lotus flower[2], you have a dark complexioned body[3] and long arms that stretch right up to your thighs[4] (13).

[1]भूपाल, [2]पुण्डरीकविशालाक्षः, [3]श्याम, [4]आजानुबाहुकः

अयोध्यां प्रादुरभूदिक्ष्वाकुकुलनन्दनः ।
त्वद्दर्शनान्महाबाहो निर्वृता स्मो वयं प्रभो ।।१४।।

You have revealed yourself[1] in Ayodhya to provide happiness and joys to the clan of Ikshwaku (who was one of the ancestors of Sri Ram). Oh Lord! We have become exhilarated and joyous by merely having your august and divine sight, called Darshan[2] (14).

[1]प्रादुरभू, [2]दर्शना

[Note :- The word 'Darshan' is different from merely 'seeing', for the former involves devotions and a sense of reverence. One experiences spiritual peace and elevation when one comes in direct communion with a divine, pious and holy being, such as a saint. A person can have Darshan of his chosen deity even with closed eyes, or while sleeping. This is obviously distinct from mere physical seeing which has no element of emotive attachment or any sense of reverence and devotion for the object seen.]

तपश्चाराम: सहितास्त्वत्प्रसादाद्वने वने ।
किन्तु सीता महादेवी प्रापं दुखं महत्प्रभो ।।१५।।

By your grace and kindness (i.e., by your benevolent protection), we are able to do 'Tapa' (austerity, penances and observance of religious sacraments, doing fire sacrifices and keeping stern religious vows) fearlessly in the different forests where we live. But oh Lord,

the great Goddess Sita has suffered a lot (15).

तदेव स्मर्यमाणं सच्चित्तमुद्वेजयेद्धि नः ।
एतमुक्ते तु मुनिभिः सानुक्रोशं पुनः पुनः ।।१६।।

When we remember about her sufferings, we feel very regretful and our minds become restless'. The sages repeatedly expressed their anguish at the sorrowful period through which Sita had to pass during her 14 year exile in the forest, including the horrible period of torments after her abduction by Ravana (16).

जहास मधुरं साध्वी सीता जनकनन्दिनी ।
उवाच सस्मितं देवी तान्मुनीन्मितभाषिणी ।।१७।।
मुनयो यद्यदुक्तं हि रावणस्य वधं प्रति ।
परिहास इवाभाति प्रशंसनमिदं द्विजाः ।।१८।।

At this, the most holy and pious Sita, the daughter of Janak[1], smiled sweetly but sarcastically[2] and curtly said to them with a cheerful sneer on her face[3] (17), 'Oh Brahmins! Whatever the great sages have said just now in praise of Sri Ram[4] regarding the slaying of Ravana[5] is nothing but a joke said in amusement![6] [That is, all these eulogies, praises and honours that have been heaped upon Sri Ram to celebrate and laud his victory over the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka, does not deserve so much attention. It was not such a great feat as to invite so much acclaim from you all. These laurels seem to be misplaced and exaggerated'.] (18) [17-18]

[1]साध्वी सीता जनकनन्दिनी, [2]जहास मधुरं, [3]उवाच सस्मितं देवी तान्मुनीन्मितभाषिणी, [4]प्रशंसनमिदं, [5]रावणस्य वधं प्रति, [6]परिहास इवाभाति

रावणो हि दुराचारः सत्यमेव न संशयः ।
दशभिर्वदनैर्वीरो जगदुद्वेजको हि सः ।।१९।।

It is also fact and truth that Ravana was very evil, pervert and wicked[1]. There is also no doubt that the brave one with 10-heads[2] tormented no end and subjected the world to great horrors[3] (19).

[1]रावणो हि दुराचारः, [2]दशभिर्वदनैर्वीरो, [3]जगदुद्वेजको

दशास्यस्य वधो विप्रा न प्रशंसामिहार्हति ।
एतच्छ्रुत्वा तु मुनयो विस्मयं परमं गताः ।।२०।।

But oh Brahmins, the killing of this 10-headed Ravana is not something to be so greatly lauded, glorified and honoured[1]'. Hearing her

chastising words, the sages were very astonished and mystified[2] (20).

[1]न प्रशंसामिहार्हति, [2]विस्मयं परमं गताः

किमेतदिति होचुस्ते परस्परमुखोक्षणाः ।
अयोनिसम्भवा सीता काकुत्स्थकुलमाश्रिता ।।२१।।
अस्मानपि जहासेयं किमेतन्नैव विद्महे ।२१½।

Stunned at the rebuke, they glanced at each other in amazement, saying, 'What is this! Sita, who has been accepted by the clan of king Ikshwaku which has given her shelter and protection[1], is expressing her mirth on what we say; she seems sarcastic and scornful and not amused at all at our lauding Sri Ram for the great and stupendous feat of killing such a formidable enemy as the great demon Ravana. She, on the contrary, ridicules us[2]. We don't know the reason for it[3]' (21-21½).

[1]अयोनिसम्भवा सीता काकुत्स्थकुलमाश्रिता, [2]अस्मानपि जहासेयं, [3]किमेतन्नैव विद्महे

तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तेषां मुनीना भावितात्मनाम् ।।२२।।
सीता भीता प्रणम्योचै कृताञ्जलिपुटा सती ।
पृथग्जनेव मुनयो नाहमनृतभार्षिणी ।।२३।।
यदि चाज्ञापयथ मां तदा वक्ष्यामि चादितः ।२३½।

When Sita heard some stern words being uttered for her by the learned sages, she became a little scared[1] (because she feared that the sages would think she was proud and over jealous, was being insulting towards not only her husband Sri Ram but also towards great sages which was in itself a horrible and unpardonable offence, and they could curse her for her temerity and impoliteness). So, the immaculate and uncorrupt Sita[2] joined her hands politely and submissively[3], bowed before them (the sages)[4], and said most humbly, 'Oh sages! I am not a liar like an ordinary, lowly person[6] (22-23). If you give me your permission, I shall narrate everything to you from the beginning' (23½). [22-23½]

[1]सीता भीता, [2]सती, [3]कृताञ्जलिपुटा, [4]प्रणम्योचै, [5]नाहमनृतभार्षिणी, [6]पृथग्जनेव

अगस्त्यप्रमुखा विप्राः सीताया विनयान्वितम् ।।२४।।
आकर्ण्य वचनं प्रीताः प्रोचुस्ते कथ्यतामिति ।
ततः सीता महाभागा प्रवक्तुमुपचक्रमे ।।२५।।

Then sage Agastya and other chief sages, upon hearing what Sita

had politely requested them, agreed, and asked her to narrate the entire episode (24). At this, the great Sita started her narration (25). [24-25]

पति मुनीन्देवरांश्च मन्त्रिणः श्रोणिमुख्यकान् ।
नियेनाभ्यनुज्ञाप्य पूर्ववृत्तान्तमादरात् ।।२६।।

She took permission from her husband, Sri Ram, the sages, her brothers-in-law, ministers and other elders present in the royal court and described the earlier event of her childhood (26).

पूर्व विवाहात्मुनयो यदासं पितृमन्दिरे ।
तर्दकोऽतिथिरूपेण ब्राह्मणः समुपागतः ।।२७।।
आगत्य पितरं मह्यं तमुवाच द्विजोत्तमः ।
चतुरो वार्षिकान्मासान्स्थस्यामि तव मन्दिरे ।।२८।।
यदि सेवापरो नित्यं भवस्यमरसन्निभः ।२८½।

'Oh sages! Before my marriage, when I lived with my father at his palace (at Janakpur), a Brahmin arrived there as a guest of my father (27). That exalted Brahmin came to my father and said, 'I shall stay here for a period of 4 months in your temple (28). Oh king! If you remain in my service diligently during this period, you shall be blessed by a stature which would be equivalent to being immortal' (28½). [27-28½]

जनको मत्पिता देवद्विजभक्तिपरायणः ।।२९।।
ब्राह्मणं वासयामास नानाभक्ष्यं समादिशत् ।
अहं च तस्य सेवायै नियुक्ता धर्मभीरुणा ।।३०।।

My Father was very devoted to Brahmins and Gods[1] (29). That Brahmin was provided with ample food and other necessities of life. My Father was humble and he feared for righteousness, probity and propriety not being violated and compromised[2]. So he appointed me on his behalf to serve that gentlemen Brahmin (29-30).

[1]भक्तिपरायणः, [2]धर्मभीरुणा

यदा यथाज्ञापयति द्विजः स परमार्थवित् ।
तं तथा ह्यकरवं तस्य रात्रिंदिवमतन्द्रिता ।।३१।।

That Brahmin was spiritually enlightened and attained one[1]. Whatever he ordered me, I carried out his orders carefully and diligently day and night without any negligence or showing leniency

on my part[2] (31).

[1]परमार्थवित्, [2]रात्रिंदिवमतन्द्रिता

नानातीर्थाभिगमनं कृतं तेन महात्मना ।
तत्रत्याश्च यथाश्चित्राः श्रावयामास मां द्विजः ।।३२।।

That great soul had roamed (visited) in many pilgrim sites. He told me numerous stories about so many pilgrim places in the world which he had visited during his wanderings to keep me entertained and happy (32).

सेवया मम धैर्येण चानुकूल्येन तर्पितः ।
कदाचिद्ब्राह्मणश्रेष्ठः प्रियभाषी यदात्थ माम् ।।३३।।

That exalted Brahmin was pleased by my service[1], patience[2] and pleasing demeanours[3]. So one day he cheerfully told me something which was hitherto not known to us (33).

[1]सेवया मम, [2]धैर्येण, [3]चानुकूल्येन

तद्वोऽहमभिधास्यामि शृणुत द्विजपुङ्गवाः ।
एकदा प्रातरुत्थाय कृतमैत्रः कृताह्निकः ।।३४।।
सीते इति समाभाष्य प्रवक्तुमुपचक्रमे ।
शृणु सीते मया दुष्टमाश्चर्यं कमलानने ।।३५।।

Whatever he told me, oh the most exalted Brahmins (or sages), I shall now describe it to you. One day, after getting up in the morning and finishing his morning rituals (34), he called me aside and began his narration —'Oh lotus-eyed Sita[1]. Listen to the astonishing and astounding, mysterious and strange things[2] that I have seen during my wanderings (35). [34-35]

[1]सीते कमलानने, [2]दुष्टमाश्चर्य

दधिमण्डोदकाब्धेश्च परः स्वादूदकोब्धिकः ।
पुषकरद्वीपमावृत्य वर्तते वलयाकृतिः ।।३६।।

Beyond the ocean of curd, whey or buttermilk[1], scum or spume[2] and water[3], there is an ocean of sweet water[4] which surrounds the island known as 'Pushkardwip'[5] like a ring or moat girdling it from all the sides[6] (36).

[1]दधि, [2]मण्डो, [3]दकाब्धेश्च, [4]स्वादूदकोब्धिकः, [5]पुषकरद्वीपमावृत्य, [6]वलयाकृतिः

पुष्करं पुष्करे दृष्टं महावहिशिखोज्जवलम् ।
पत्रायुतायुतयुतं ब्रह्मणः परमासनम् ।।३७।।

In that island (or a small continent) called Pushkar, there is a divine glorious lotus having 10,000 petals, which is radiant and glowing like a flame or filament of a great fire burning splendourously[2]. Upon this great lotus, there is the exalted seat of Brahma, the creator[3] (37).

[1]पुष्करं पत्रायुतायुतयुतं, [2]महावहिशिखोज्जवलम्, [3]ब्रह्मण: परमासनम्

तद्द्वीपवर्षयोर्मध्ये मानसोत्तरसंज्ञक: ।
मर्यादापर्वतो दैर्घ्ये चायामेऽयुतयोजन: ।।३८।।

At the center of that island, there is a great mountain called 'Maryada'[1]. It is regarded to be as of the same stature as the mountain on the northern banks of the lake called Mansarovar (a reference to mount Kailash, the abode of Shiva in the Himalayas)[2]. It covers an area of 10,000 Yojans[3] (38).

[1]मर्यादापर्वतो, [2]मानसोत्तरसंज्ञक:, [3]चायामेऽयुतयोजन:

[Note :- 1 Yojan = 6, 8 or 16 miles according to different scales of measurement. However, the median figure of 8 miles is generally regarded as being equivalent to 1 Yojan. See also verse no. 46.]

तच्छैलस्य चतुर्दिक्षु इन्द्रादीनां पुराणि हि ।
क्रीडार्थं निर्मितान्येषां महान्ति विश्वकर्मणा ।।३९।।

In all the 4 directions of that mountain, there are the abodes of Indra and other Gods which the great architect of Gods, Vishwakarma[1], had created for their sportful activities[2], or for their residence where they can have all possible comforts (39).

[1]महान्ति विश्वकर्मणा, [2]क्रीडार्थं निर्मिता

सुमाली साक्षसश्रेष्ठो कैकसी नाम तत्सुता ।
मुनेर्विश्रवस: पत्नी सा सुत रावणद्वयम् ।।४०।।
एक: सहस्रवदनो द्वितीयो दशवक्त्रक: ।
जन्मकाले सुरैरुक्तमाकाशे रावणद्वयम् ।।४१।।
लोकानां रावणाज्जातं नागयौगिकमेतयो: ।४१½।

Sumali, who was the best and the most superior amidst the demon race, had a daughter named Kaikasi. She became the wife of sage Vishrawa and produced two sons, each one called Ravana[1] (40). One had a thousand faces (heads)[2] and the other one had ten faces (heads)[3]. At the time of their birth, the Gods had declared from the heavens that there would be two Ravanas[4] (41). Though there are two Ravanas

born in this world, both had the same name[5] (41½). [40-41½]

[1]रावणद्वयम्, [2]एक: सहस्रवदनो, [3]द्वितीयो दशवक्त्रक:, [4]जन्मकाले सुरैरुक्तमाकाशे रावणद्वयम्, [5]लोकानां रावणाज्जातं नागयौगिकमेतयो:

कनिष्ठो दशकण्ठोऽयं शितिकण्ठप्रसादत: ।।४२।।
लङ्कामधिवसत्येष धनदेन विनिर्मिताम् ।
ब्रह्मणो वरदानेन त्रिलोकीमवमन्यते ।।४३।।

The 10-headed one[1], who was the younger sibling of the two[2], lived in the city of Lanka[3], which was constructed by Kuber[4], by the grace of Lord Shiva[5]. By the boons given to him by Brahma, the creator[6], he treated all the three worlds (the nether, the terrestrial, and the celestial) with utter contempt[7] (42-43).

[1]दशकण्ठा, [2]कनिष्ठो, [3]लङ्कामधिवसत्येष, [4]धनदेन विनिर्मिताम्, [5]शितिकण्ठप्रसादत:, [6]ब्रह्मणो वरदानेन, [7]त्रिलोकीमवमन्यत

श्रेष्ठ: सहस्रवदनो रावणो लोकरावण: ।
स्वाभाविकबलेनासौ पुष्करद्वीपमाश्रित: ।।४४।।

Out of them, the Ravana who was 1000-headed[1], senior of the two[2] and who had made the world weep and wail[3] by his vicious and tyrannical habits[4], took a residence in an island or a small continent called Pushkar[5] (44).

[1]सहस्रवदनो रावणो, [2]श्रेष्ठ:, [3]लोकरावण:, [4]स्वाभाविकबले, [5]पुष्करद्वीपमाश्रित:

सूर्याचन्द्रमसो गृह्यं क्रीडेत्कन्दुकलीलया ।
कुलाचलान्समुद्गृह्य कन्दुकं क्रीडते हि स: ।।४५।।

He can use the Sun and the Moon[1] as balls to play a game of soccer[2], and he uses great immovable mountains called Kulachal[3] to play football[4] (45).

[1]सूर्याचन्द्रमसो, [2]क्रीडेत्कन्दुकलीलया, [3]कुलाचलान्समुद्गृह्य, [4]कन्दुकं क्रीडत

मानसोत्तरशैलस्य चतुर्दिक्षु पुराणि हि ।
आच्छिद्य संगृहीतानि दिगीशानां महात्मनाम् ।।४६।।

All the divine mountainous abodes of Gods lying to the north of the Mansarovar Lake (see also verse no. 38) have been breached and conquered by him[1], and all their great Lords, the various Digpals[2], have been collectively subjugated by him[3] (46).

[1]आच्छिद्य, [2]दिगीशानां महात्मनाम्, [3]संगृहीतानि

तत्रैव रमते राजा मातामहकुलै: सह ।

तत्रैन्द्री या पुरी रम्या स स्वयं तत्र तिष्ठति ।।४७।।

He lives and enjoys life there (at Pushkar) along with the members of his race (demons) belonging to his mother's side[1]. This is a charming and magnificent city belonging to Indra, the king of Gods. He (the 1000-headed Ravana) lives there (47).

[1]मातामहकुलैः सह

[Note :- His mother Kaikasi was the daughter of the demon race while his father was a sage named Vishrawa. See verse no. 40. The episode of Ravana's birth and how this sage came to become the husband of Kaikasi has been described in detail in 'Adhyatma Ramayan' by Veda Vyas in its Uttar Kand, canto 1, an English version of which has been published separately by this humble author.]

अन्यान्यन्येभ्य एवादान्मन्त्रिभ्यो राक्षसाधिपः ।
विशेषतोऽलंकृता सा पुरी परमदुर्लभा ।।४८।।

That king of demons (thousand headed Ravana)[1] bestowed ministerial honours[2] to many. That city is most inaccessible for other creatures (except the demons)[3]. It has been especially decorated and pepped up[4] by him to stand out prominently amongst all other cities of great rulers (48).

[1]राक्षसाधिपः, [2]अन्यान्यन्येभ्य एवादान्मन्त्रिभ्यो, [3]पुरी परमदुर्लभा, [4]विशेषतोऽलंकृता

जगतां सारमाकृष्य यथास्थानं सुमण्डिता ।
चम्पकाशोकमन्दारकदलीप्रियाकार्जुनैः ।।४९।।
पाटलाशोकजम्बूभिः कोविदारैश्च चन्दनैः ।
पनसैः सालतालैश्च तमालैर्देवादारुभिः ।।५०।।
वकुलैः पारिजातैश्च कल्पवृक्षैरलंकृता ।
अन्यैश्च विविधैर्वृक्षैः सर्वर्तुकुसुमोज्ज्वलैः ।।५१।।

It has been constructed by using the best of things available in this world[1]. It is bedecked with numerous varieties of flowers and trees —such as Champak (magnolia, or *Mechelia Champacca*), Ashok, Mandar (swallow wart; *Calotrapis Gigantea*), Kadali (the plantain tree), Priyak (any charming flower), Arjun (*Terminalia Alatagabra)*, Paatal (the trumpet tree), Jambu (the black plum and Varuna trees), Kovidar (conifer), Chandan (sandalwood), Panas (jackfruit), Saal (the cypress tree), Tamaal (the black catechu), Taal

(palm), Devdaru (the fig tree), Vakain (the lilac) Parijat (the coral jasmine; *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis*; or Harisingar) and the Kalpataru (an evergreen tree of Gods). Besides these trees, it is decorated with so many other trees and flowering plants that blossom in all the seasons throughout the year[2] (49-51).

[1]जगतां सारमाकृष्य, [2]सर्वर्तुकुसुमोज्ज्वलैः

दिव्यगन्धरसैर्दिव्यैः सर्वर्तुफलसंयुतैः ।
भ्रमरैः कोकिलैर्नावर्णपक्षिभिरुज्ज्वला ।।५२।।

There are trees there which are laden with succulent, ripe and juicy fruits giving out a sweet aroma[1]; these trees are perinnial and grow around the year in all the seasons[2]. Birds and insects of different varieties, such as bees, cuckoo and others are cheerfully humming, buzzing and chirping around on those trees[3] (52).

[1]दिव्यगन्ध, [2]सर्वर्तु, [3]रुज्ज्वला

शातकौम्भमयैः कैश्चित्कैश्चिदग्निशिखोपमैः ।
नीलाञ्जननिभैश्चान्यैः शोभिता वरपादपैः ।।५३।।

Mountains and hills made of gold, or those which are golden in colour like the flame of a fire[1] or are bluish in hue like the light blue sky[2], adorn the place here and there (like gems studded in an ornament). Tall and pleasant looking trees adorn these mountains and hills[3] (53).

[1]शातकौम्भमयैः कैश्चित्कैश्चिदग्निशिखोपमैः, [2]नीलाञ्जननिभैश्चान्यैः, [3]शोभिता वरपादपैः

दीर्घिकाः सति बह्व्योऽत्र जल पूर्णा महोदयाः ।
महार्हमणिसोपानः स्फाटिकान्तरकुट्टिमाः ।।५४।।

There are a number of large water bodies such as ponds, lakes, rivers, wells, tanks etc.[1] there, which are accessed by steps studded with gems and jewels, precious stones[2] and crystals[3] (54).

[1]दीर्घिकाः सति बह्व्योऽत्र जल पूर्णा महोदयाः, [2]महार्हमणिसोपानः कुट्टिमाः, [3]स्फाटिक

फुल्लपद्मोत्पलवनाश्चकवाकोपशोभिताः ।
दात्यूहगणसंघुष्टा हंससारसनोदिताः ।।५५।।

These water bodies look very pleasant and beautiful because they are surrounded and adorned by a dense growth of lotus flowers with open petals, which are blooming in their pristine beauty[1]. The dense groves, orchards, gardens, bowers, arbours, alcoves etc are

adorned[2] with chirping and frolicking birds such as swans, ruddy goose etc.[3] (55).

[1]फुल्लपद्मोत्पलवनाश्चकवाकोपशोभिता:, [2]दात्यूहगणसंघुष्टा, [3]हंससारसनोदिता:

तत्र तत्रावनेर्देशा वैदूर्यमणिसन्निभा: ।
शार्दूलै: परमोपेता: सुखार्थमुपकल्पिता: ।।५६।।

The countryside that has these forests[1] is adorned with precious stones known as 'Vaiduryamani', also called Lahasuniya[2]. There are lions and tigers in abundance[3] there. These forests, infested with such wild animals, have been created for pleasure, enjoyment and sport[4] (56).

[1]तत्रावनेर्देशा, [2]वैदूर्यमणिसन्निभा:, [3]शार्दूलै: परमोपेता:, [4]सुखार्थमुपकल्पिता:

सर्वर्तुसुखदा रम्या: पुंस्कोकिलकलरवा: ।
ये वृक्षा नन्दनेऽतिष्टन् ये च चैत्रवने स्थिता: ।।५७।।
मन्दरेऽन्येषु शैलेषु ते वृक्षास्तत्र सन्स्थिता: ।५७½।

All the charming and beautiful trees[1] that provide comfort and cheer in all the seasons the year round[2], and where the male cuckoos[3] frolic around, are present there. These trees have been collected from as far afield as Nandanvan[4], Chaitrvan[5] and Mt. Mandrachal[6] (57-57½).

[1]रम्या: [2]सर्वर्तुसुखदा, [3]पुंस्कोकिलकलरवा:, [4]नन्दन, [5]चैत्रवने, [6]मन्दरे

नानामणिमयी भूमिर्मुक्ताजालमयी तथा ।।५८।।
विचित्रबद्धसोपानप्रसादैरुपशोभिता ।
पुरद्वारसमाकीर्णा पुरी परमशोभना ।।५९।।

This land (country of Pushkar) is adorned with magnificent and strange palaces[1] whose steps are studded with different gems, jewels and precious stones[2] upon which are laid latticed mattings made of pearls[3]. The most fascinating and charming city[4] is surrounded by gates on all the sides[5] (58-59).

[1]भूमि विचित्रबद्धसोपानप्रसादैरुपशोभिता, [2]नानामणिमयी, [3]र्मुक्ताजालमयी, [4]पुरी परमशोभना, [5]पुरद्वारसमाकीर्णा

न दैवेरनुभूयेत स्वर्गिभिर्नानुभूयते ।
तत्पुरीस्थितिमाकांक्ष्य तप: कुर्वन्ति सत्तमा: ।।६०।।

Neither the Gods nor any other residents of the heavens can ever imagine and experience its glory, majesty, pomp and splendour[1]. Not only has this, but even great souls (such as enlightened and

wise demons) do Tapa (severe penances and austerities) there[2] to obtain permanence and stability[3]. [That is, unlike the city of Lanka where none of the demons pursue any religious or spiritual activities to ensure its long term good as well as of their own welfare, there are many such activities going on at Pushkar Island where the 1000-headed Ravana lives. He has done it to ensure that the city and its residents are given protection from the wrath of sages and hermits because of the shield provided to the city by performance of many religious activities there, such as doing Tapa] (60).

[1]सत्तमा:, [2]तप: कुर्वन्ति, [3]तत्पुरीस्थितिमाकांक्ष्य

तस्यां सहस्रवदनो रावणो राक्षसाधिप: ।
आस्ते जगद्वशीकृत्य हेलया बाहु लीलया ।।६१।।

The king of that place is the thousand headed Ravana who is the great king of demons. He has conquered the whole world by the strength of his arms (61).

इन्द्रादींस्त्रिदशान्सर्वान्गाले बद्धा स किन्नरान् ।
गन्धर्वानन्दानवान्भीमान्सर्पान्विद्याधरांस्तथा ।।६२।।
बालक्रीडनया क्रीडन्मेरुं मन्येत सर्षपम् ।
गोष्पदं मन्यते चाब्धि सर्वलोकांस्तृणोपमान् ।।६३।।
द्वीपांल्लोष्टसमान्वीरो न किञ्चिद्गणयनदृशा ।६३½।

He has conquered Indra and other Gods, Kinnars (celestial singers and dancers), Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Danavas (demons; non-Gods), ferocious serpents (representing creatures of the subterranean and nether worlds) and Vidyadhars (junior Gods who are better then Kinnars and Gandharvas) etc.. He plays with them (instead of tormenting them and holding them in his prison as captives and trophies of conquest). He treats Mt. Meru as if it were a mustard seed[1], the ocean as if it is a shallow depression caused in soft earth by a cow's hoof[2], and the rest of the world as a mere blade of grass or reed or twig[3]. He regards the continents and islands as nothing more than clods of Mud[4] and pays no bother to brave and valiant ones, no matter how strong, valiant and potent they are[5] (62-63½).

[1]मेरुं मन्येत सर्षपम्, [2]गोष्पदं मन्यते चाब्धि, [3]सर्वलोकांस्तृणोपमान्, [4]द्वीपांल्लोष्टसमान्वीरा, [5]किञ्चिद्गणयनदृशा

स सदा सर्वलोकानां त्रासने समुपारभत् ।।६४।।

तदा पितामहोऽभ्येत्य पुलस्त्यो विश्रवास्तथा ।
न्यवारयन्यत्नस्ततं तातवत्सेति भाषकः ।।६५।।

When he became too reckless, uncontrollable and belligerent, and started to torment the world in a ferocious and horrifying manner, his grandfather Pulastya and his father Visrawa went to him and tried to appease him with polite pampering, using most endearing words such as 'son, dear'[1] etc. to calm him down and some how dissuade him from acting recklessly and unrighteously. They tried their best to put a restraint on him[2] (64-65).

[1]तातवत्सेति, [2]न्यवारयन्यत्नस्ततं

एवं स रावणो देवि सहस्रवदनो महान् ।
पुष्करद्वीपमासाद्य वर्तते जनकात्मजे ।।६६।।
तस्यानुजो दशास्योऽयं लङ्कायां जानकी स्थितः ।।६७।।

Oh Goddess, the daughter of Janak (i.e., Sita)! This is the way that great 1000-headed Ravana lives in the island called Pushkar (66). And, oh Janki, his younger brother (the 10-headed Ravana) lives in Lanka' (67). [66-67]

चित्राणीत्यादीनि मे शंसयित्वा विप्रो मासाश्चतुरो यापयित्वा ।
राजानं मां चाशिषा योजयित्वा जगामैकः प्रोषितस्तीर्थयात्राम् ।।६८।।

Sita continued with the narration; she said, 'Living there for 4 months during which he had told me many such fascinating and magnificent stories, that guest Brahmin blessed the king (my father Janak) and me, and then he went away for pilgrimage to other holy sites' (68).

Thus ends Canto 17 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the birth and the city of the 1000-headed Ravana of Pushkar.

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Canto 18
Sri Ram goes on a mission to conquer the 1000-headed Ravana of Pushkar; the description of the demon army

When Sita snubbed the sages for praising Sri Ram's victory over the 10-headed Ravana, saying that when a more formidable and many times more stronger elder brother of Ravana, the 1000-headed sibling with the same name, still lives, such praise is uncalled for and smacks of flattery. Taking up the cue as a challenge to his authority and supremacy as well as his potent and strength, Sri Ram collected his army of men, monkeys (the companions of Sugriv) and demons (the companions of Vibhishan) and launched the offensive against the 1000-headed Ravana. When the senior Ravana heard that a war cry has been sounded in his kingdom, his demon forces rushed out to meet the challenge posed by the invading army of Sri Ram.

This Canto describes in detail the arms that they carried with them and lists the individual names of the demons generals and commanders.

एवं स रावणो विप्राः सहस्रवदनो महान् ।
प्रोक्तस्तेन द्विजेनाहं श्रुत्वाश्चर्य च विस्मिता ।।१।।

Sita said, 'Oh great sages! That Brahmin told me this story of a 1000-headed Ravana, and I was very amazed and awed when I heard it (1).

अद्यापि तन्मम हृदि जागरूकं हि वर्तते ।
पत्या मे बाहुवीर्येण दशास्यो रावणो हतः ।।२।।

Even till this day, that story is live in my heart; he (the 1000-headed Ravana) is virtually alive in my heart[1]; I cannot forget him. My husband (Sri Ram) has been able to slay the 10-headed Ravana[2] by the strength and potent of his arms[3] (2).

[1]हृदि जागरूकं हि वर्तते, [2]दशास्यो रावणो हतः, [3]बाहुवीर्येण

सानुगः ससुतामात्यः सभ्रातृकः सबान्धवः ।
मत्कृते च पुरी दग्धा सेतुर्बद्धश्च वारिधौ ।।३।।

He (the 10-headed junior Ravana) was killed along with his sons, followers, brother, kith and kin. To rescue me, his city (Lanka) was burnt to ashes and a bridge was constructed across the ocean (3).

सुग्रीवेण सहायेन तथा हनूमदादिना ।
इदं लोकोत्तरं कर्मं कृतं लोकहितं महत् ।।४।।

Taking the help of Sugriv and Hanuman, he (Sri Ram) accomplished this stupendous and most magnificent and supernatural deed[1] for the good and welfare of the world (because this Ravana was tormenting it endlessly, and by slaying him, some semblance of peace was restored in the world)[2] (4).

[1]कर्मं कृतं महत् लोकोत्तरं, [2]लोकहित

तथापि हृदि मे नैतदाश्चर्य प्रतिभाति हि ।
यदि तस्य वधं कुर्याद्रावणस्य दुरात्मनः ।।५।।
तदा सम्भाव्यते कीतिर्जगत्स्वास्थ्यमवाप्नुयात् ।
अतो मे हसितं विप्राः क्षमध्वं ज्वलनोपमाः ।।६।।

Inspite of that, nothing that he (Sri Ram) did appears great or surprising or praise worthy in my heart[1]. When he is able to conquer and kill[2] that thousand headed evil and wicked Ravana[3] (5), it is only then that his true fame and valour would spread and get firmly established in the world[4]. It is then that the world will be really and truthfully freed of its tormenting ailment and horrors inflicted upon it by that fellow (the senior Ravana)[5].

Oh Brahmins who are as honourable as the holy fire[6]! For this reason you shall excuse and forgive me for my temerity for sneering and speaking out of turn and appearing to be showing impertinence and rebuke[7]' (6). [5-6]

[1]हृदि मे नैतदाश्चर्य, [2]यदि तस्य वधं, [3]कुर्याद्रावणस्य दुरात्मनः, [4]सम्भाव्यते कीतिर्जग, [5]र्जगत्स्वास्थ्यमवाप्नुयात्, [6]ज्वलनोपमाः, [7]मे हसितं विप्राः क्षमध्वं

आकर्ण्य मुनयः सर्वे साधु साध्विति वादिनः ।
जानकीं प्रशशंसुस्ते सर्वलोकहितैषिणीम् ।।७।।

Hearing these words, all the assembled sages and seers hailed Sita and lauded her for her courage and forthrightedness[1]. They praised Janki (Sita)[2] for her thought for the long term welfare and goodness of the world[3] (7).

[1]साधु साध्विति वादिनः, [2]जानकीं प्रशशंसुस्ते, [3]सर्वलोकहितैषिणीम्

राघवो वचनं श्रुत्वा सीताया वीर्यवर्द्धनम् ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः सर्वानाज्ञपयत्प्रभुः ।।८।।

Hearing these inspiring and compelling words of Sita which were encouraging as well as instigating and which stoked the fire of self esteem, dignity, manliness and valour in Sri Ram[1], the latter roared like a lion (or he raised a war cry)[2]. The Lord immediately raised his voice[3] and gave the royal command (to prepare for the offensive)[4] (8).

[1]वचनं सीताया वीर्यवर्द्धनम्, [2]सिंहनाद, [3]विनद्योच्चैः, [4]सर्वानाज्ञपयत्प्रभुः

मुनयोऽद्यैव गन्तव्यं रावणस्य जयाय वै ।
लक्ष्मणं भरतं चैव शत्रुघ्नं चादिशत्प्रभुः ।।९।।

Sri Ram declared, 'Oh sages! I shall immediately go to vanquish that Ravana today itself'. He gave necessary instructions to Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan, his brothers (9).

मित्र सुग्रीव हनूमन्सर्वे जाम्बवदादयः ।
गच्छामः सहितास्तत्र सैनिकैः सह मन्त्रिभिः ।।१०।।

Accompanied by friends Sugriv (the king of monkeys), Hanuman (chief minister of Sugriv who was an ardent devotee of Sri Ram), Jamvant (the bear king) etc., along with the army of Ayodhya, we shall go there fortwith' (10).

इत्याज्ञपाप्य महाबाहुः सस्मार पुष्पकं स्थम् ।
स्मरणादागतस्तत्र पुष्पको रथसत्तमः ।।११।।

Saying this, the most brave one with strong arms (Sri Ram)[1], remembered and invited the divine chariot named Pushpak[2]. As soon as it was remembered, the most excellent chariot of the Gods[3], Pushpak, came there (11).

[1]महाबाहुः, [2]पुष्पकं स्थम्, [3]रथसत्तमः

[Note :- The Pushpak was actually an air plane and not a chariot par se that moved on the ground upon wheels. It belonged to Kuber, the treasurer of Gods and the elder step brother of the 10-headed Ravana. It had been forcibly snatched by Ravana of Lanka after he had defeated Kuber, the rightful owner of Pushpak, and it was sent back to its rightful owner, Kuber, by Sri Ram after he had come back to Ayodhya from Lanka. At that time, Sri Ram had requested

[Pushpak to come to him whenever he requisitioned it for his own service. Obviously, a plane is not a human being or any other creature which can listen and talk. Perhaps, 'Pushpak' was the name of its chief pilot or commander, or perhaps the plane had some kind of advanced technology that could respond to voice commands. If the latter is the case, then surely it was remote controlled.]

तत्रारुहन्महावीरारामचन्द्रपुरोगमाः ।
भरतो लक्ष्मणश्चैव शत्रुघ्नश्चामितद्युतिः ।।१२।।

Sri Ram boarded it first followed by all the warriors and his brothers Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan who were radiant like a fount of so many sources of electric[1] (12).

[1]श्चामितद्युतिः

सुग्रीवा प्रमुखाः सर्वे वानराजितकाशिनः ।
विभीषणो महाबाहुः सह रक्षोगणैः प्रभुः ।।१३।।

Alongside all the chief monkeys who had the potentials of obtaining victory over the enemy[1], Sugriv also boarded the plane. King Vibhishan[2], who was strong in arms[3], also got aboard accompanied by his demons[4] (13).

[1]प्रमुखाः सर्वे वानराजितकाशिनः, [2]प्रभुः, [3]महाबाहुः, [4]सह रक्षोगणैः

मात्रापित्रप्यकथनादजानन्बोधितोऽनया ।
सीतया रामकार्यार्थैं निर्ययौ राघवाज्ञया ।।१४।।

They did not take permission from or inform their parents. Inspired and spurred by Sita[1] and ordered by Sri Ram[2], they commenced on the mission to accomplish the work of the Lord[3] (14).

[1]सीतया निर्ययौ, [2]राघवाज्ञया, [3]रामकार्यार्थैं

[Note :- This verse shows that when one steps forward to do the work of the Lord, there is no need to either inform or take permission from one's elders, such as one's parents and Guru. Further, no invocation of other Gods is also necessary if one goes on the Lord's mission. These courtesies, formalities and traditions need not be adhered to when the Lord's work is at stake.]

सुमन्त्राद्या मन्त्रिगणश्च ऋषयस्ते च निर्ययुः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणास्तत्रायुधकलापिनः ।।१५।।

मुमुचुस्ते सिंहनादं महाघोरं महाबलाः ।१५½।

Ministers such as Sumantra and all those sages who had assembled there also accompanied the party. Those most brave, strong, potent, powerful and valiant warriors[1], who were well armed with different varieties of arms and armaments[2], raised a tumultuous war cry[3] (15-15½).

[1]महाबलाः, [2]सिंहनादं महाघोरं, [3]नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणास्तत्रायुधकलापिनः

धनुःशब्देन रामस्य सिंहनादेन चैव हि ।।१६।।
चचाल वसुधा शैलाश्चैलुः पेतुर्ग्रहाश्च खात् ।
नद्योऽशुष्यन्समुद्रेलाः सागराश्च चकम्पिरे ।।१७।।

By the resonating twang made by the bow of Sri Ram[1] and his thunderous roar[2], the earth and the mountains shook and trembled[3], the celestial bodies such as the different planets cracked, and splinters and shrapnel from them began falling down upon the earth (i.e., there was a shower of meteors from the sky)[4], the rivers started drying up (probably because either they changed their courses or were sucked in by the cracking of the river bed by the shaking and crunching of the earth)[5], and the ocean abandoned its limits (i.e., the waters of the ocean heaved and rose to submerge large tracts of lands as during a high tide; there were huge ocean waves, some island disappeared underneath and new ones emerged. This scenario resembles the Tsunami that had lashed some parts of south-east Asia recently in 2007)[6] (16-17).

[1]धनुःशब्देन, [2]रामस्य सिंहनादेन, [3]चचाल वसुधा शैलाश्चैलुः, [4]पेतुर्ग्रहाश्च खात्, [5]नद्योऽशुष्यन्स, [6]सागराश्च चकम्पिरे

सुग्रीवो हनुमान्नीलो जाम्बवान्नल एव च ।
ग्रसन्त इव ते सर्वे निर्ययू रामशासनात् ।।१८।।

Sugriv (the monkey king), Hanuman (his chief minister and greatest devotee of Sri Ram), Neel (the chief architect who had constructed the bridge over the ocean during Sri Ram's campaign to Lanka to conquer the city and rescue Sita from the clutches of the 10-headed Ravana), Jamvant (the bear king) —all of them moved ahead on the orders of Sri Ram. Their demeanours and attitude made it appear as if the sky was being devoured by them; the sky was being

completely obscured by them or eclipsed by them[1]. [That is, the army moved in such great numbers and with such great speed, defiance and vigour that it appeared to cover the sky from end to end as if almost devouring it or eclipsing it. The sky appeared to be covered by a dense bank of thick cloud of dust raised by the army, completely obscuring it from view.] (18)

[1]ग्रसन्त इव ते सर्वे

स तया सीतया सार्द्ध रामचन्द्रो महाबलः ।
कामगं पुष्पकं दिव्यमारुरोह धनुर्धरः ॥१९॥

Then Sri Ram holding the bow sat on the divine and magnificent Pushpak plane along with Sita. This plane could be steered at will (19).

पुष्पकं ते समारुह्या सर्वं एव महाबलाः ।
सीतया भ्रातृभिः सार्द्धं रामचन्द्र महाबलाः ॥२०॥

All those great braves[1] boarded the Pushpak. Along with Sita and his brothers, the most brave and strong Sri Ram[2] also boarded it (20).

[1]सर्वं एव महाबलाः, [2]रामचन्द्र महाबलाः

[Note :- Surely and obviously, the Pushpak was no ordinary royal plane meant for great Gods or kings. It must have been a gigantic military transport plane that was big enough to accommodate the entire army along with its arms and armaments.]

प्रोत्साहयन्तो वचनैर्निययुर्जितकाशिनः ।
रामाज्ञया पुष्पकं तदाकाशपथमाश्रितम् ॥२१॥

All of them had the requisite potential and were honoured and recognised as 'great conquerors of enemies'[1]. Sri Ram encouraged all of them with his bold and encouraging words[2]. At his instructions, Pushpak lifted itself from the ground and became skybound[3] (21).

[1]र्निययुर्जितकाशिनः, [2]प्रोत्साहयन्तो वचन, [3]तदाकाशपथमाश्रितम्

मनोमारुतवेगेन क्षणोन गरुडो यथा ।
जगमा पुष्करद्वीपं यत्रास्ते मानसोत्तरः ॥२२॥

It moved with the speed and swiftness of mind, wind and the legendary Garud (the eagle or heron bird who is the mount of Lord Vishnu and is considered the fastest and swiftest bird in existence)[1]. In a short time[2] it arrived at the Pushkar island or a small continent[3]

lying to the north of the Manas lake[4] (22).

[1]मनोमारुतवेगेन गरुडो, [2]क्षणेन, [3]पुष्करद्वीपं, [4]मानसोत्तरः

मानसोत्तरमासाद्य विस्मितास्ते महाबलाः ।
किं चित्रं किं चित्रमिति प्रोचुराश्चर्यलक्षणाः ॥२३॥

When those brave, strong and valiant warriors[1] reached the northern side of Manas lake[2], they were awed and amazed[3] at what they saw. They exclaimed repeatedly in wonderment[4], 'What a wonderful and fascinating sight; how amazing, how strange and how mystifying a sight that we behold. What an astonishing view that we see in front of us[5]!' (23).

[1]महाबलाः, [2]मानसोत्तरमासाद्य, [3]विस्मितास्ते, [4]प्रोचुराश्चर्यलक्षणाः, [5]किं चित्रं किं चित्रमिति

राघवो भ्रातृभिः सार्द्धं सह वानरपुङ्गवैः ।
सिंहनादं ननादोच्चैधर्नुनुश्चापि व्यकर्षयत् ॥२४॥

Raghav (Sri Ram) roared like a lion accompanied by his brothers and the monkeys. [That is, all of them gave out a loud and shrill war cry.] Then he pulled the strings of his bow (24).

स शब्दस्तुमुलो भूत्वा पृथिवीं चान्तरीक्षकम् ।
पातालविवरांश्चैव पूरयामास सर्वतः ॥२५॥

The thunderous and loud uproar of battle cry[1] spread throughout not only the sky and every nook, corner, cave, burrow and crevice of the earth[2] but also penetrated the fissures and cracks[3] in the earth to reach the subterranean and nether worlds[4]. [That is, the whole world resonated with the clamour of the war cry raised by Sri Ram and his army.] (25)

[1]शब्दस्तुमुलो, [2]पृथिवीं चान्तरीक्षकम् पूरयामास सर्वतः, [3]विवरां, [4]पाताल

रावणः सहसोत्तस्थौ किमेतदिति सम्वदन् ।
तत्राथ राक्षसाः क्रुद्धाः सर्व एव विनियुर्युः ॥२६॥
अहो कुतः स्विंच्छब्दोऽयं साधु सर्वेनिरुप्यताम् ।२६।

The 1000-headed Ravana was completely taken aback and exclaimed with a start, surprised and astonished at this sudden unexpected development, 'What is this!' He became alert and set up bolt upright. All the demons hurriedly came out angrily together to investigate the matter and the cause of the upheaval, saying 'lets find out from where this noise is coming and what is the cause of this unprecedented tumult and nuisance?' (26-26½)

इत्याभाष्य राक्षसेन्द्रो राक्षसेन्द्रैर्महाबलैः ।।२७।।
नगरान्निर्ययौ शीघ्रं सन्दष्टोष्ठपुटो बली ।
द्वादशादित्यसङ्काशः सहस्रवदनो महान् ।।२८।।

This way, that strong and brave king of demons[1] came out of the city very swiftly, chewing and biting his lips in anger, vehemence, annoyance and disgust[2]. He was accompanied by other great demon chieftains who were as strong, valiant and brave as him[3]. His one thousand faces (heads)[4] glowed like all the 12 Adityas (legendary mythological sons) shining simultenously[5] (27-28).

[1]राक्षसेन्द्रो बली, [2]सन्दष्टोष्ठपुटो, [3]राक्षसेन्द्रैर्महाबलैः, [4]सहस्रवदनो महान्, [5]द्वादशादित्यसङ्काशः

[Note :- According to Purans, the Adityas are 12 mythological suns and they shine simultaneously at the time of dooms day. By referring to them, Valmiki wishes to emphasis the point that Ravana glowed so furiously in anger and annoyance that he appeared to resemble the scenario appearing at the time of dooms day when all the mythological suns shine together.]

द्विसहस्रभुजोद्रिक्तो द्विसहस्रविलोचनः ।
महामेघसमाध्वाने वडवाग्निसमः क्रुधा ।।२९।।

He had two thousand arms[1] and two thousand eyes[2]. He resembled the huge dark fearsome cloud appearing during doomsday[3]. His anger was so furious that it resembled the ferocious fire called 'Vadwagni' (the legendary underground fire that dries up the ocean and results in the creation of large tracts of desert)[4] (29).

[1]द्विसहस्रभुजा, [2]द्विसहस्रविलोचनः, [3]महामेघसमाध्वाने, [4]वडवाग्निसमः क्रुधा

शतयोजनविस्तीर्णे रथे सूर्यसमत्विषि ।
नानयुधानि संगृह्य परिधप्रासतोमरान् ।।३०।।

He strode on a war chariot which was so huge that it covered an area of 1000 Yojans (or roughly 800 miles)[1] and it glowed with the radiance of the sun[2]. He collected different types of arms and armaments[3] in it. Some of them are the following— Parigh and Pras (ancient spear, spike or lancet) as well as Tomar (a weapon having a long wooden rod having a hammer-like head for bashing the head of the enemy; a manual battering ram) (30).

[1]शतयोजनविस्तीर्णे रथे, [2]सूर्यसमत्विषि, [3]नानयुधानि संगृह्य

भुसुण्डि परशून्धण्टां लौहमुद्गर चक्रकम् ।
पाशांश्च विविधान्गृह्य बाणान्कर्मारमार्जितान् ।।३१।।

He arrived himself with other weapons such as Bhushundi (an ancient weapon designed like a pick axe), Parashu (a battle axe), Ghanta (a weight attached to a chain), iron Mudgar (a dumbbell type of weapon), Chakra (a war disc with razor sharp serrated edge), Pash (iron clamps or grips or vices or snares) and arrows (31).

विपाठान्क्षुरधारांश्च अर्धचन्द्राकृतीनपि ।
नानायुधसहस्राणि नानाविधनूंषि च ।।३२।।

He had thousands of weapons, arms and armaments with him. They were all very uncompromising and as sharp and effective as a knife. Some of the sharp edged weapons that he carried were shaped like a crescent moon (e.g., a sickle). He had bows of numerous varieties (32).

प्रगृह्य सहसा प्रयाद्यत्र रामो धनुधरः ।
लोचनैः क्रोधसन्दीप्तैरुल्काभिरिव दीपितः ।।३३।।

He (the 1000-headed Ravana) immediately came to the place where Sri Ram, who was holding a bow at the ready, was present to confront him. His angry eyes lit up like a burning meteor[1] (33).

[1]रुल्काभिरिव दीपितः

कोयमित्यब्रवीत्क्रोधानलं प्रोद्वमन्निव ।
सिंहनादं मम पुरे रिपुत्वाद्विससर्ज ह ।।३४।।

Spitting fire and brimstone with furious anger[1], he thundered, 'Who is this enemy who dares to roar so loudly like a lion[2] in my city? (34).

[1]कोयमित्यब्रवीत्क्रोधानलं, [2]सिंहनादं मम पुरे रिपुत्वाद्विससर्ज ह

ममापि रिपुरस्तीति दुर्यशः समुपस्थितम् ।
इन्द्राद्याः ककुभां नाथा भृत्या प्राणपरीप्सया ।।३५।।

That there is someone who is opposed to me[1] is a cause of great shame and concern for me[2]. Even Indra and other Gods are subservient to me; they are like my slaves and servants[3] (35).

[1]ममापि रिपुरस्तीति, [2]दुर्यशः, [3]भृत्या प्राणपरीप्सया

पातालविवरे स्वर्ग स्वर्गे पातालमेककम् ।
करोमि सहसैवाहं मानवानां तथैकताम् ।।३६।।

I can put the heavens inside a hole, a trench or a cave in the

netherworld and thrust the latter in the former. I can easily herd all the humans and stuff them in there (36).

मेरुप्रभृतिशैलांश्च चूर्णचाम्यणुसंख्यया ।
देवलोकं नृणां कुर्यान्नृलोकं त्रिविवौकसाम् ।।३७।।

I can crush to dust huge mountains the likes of mount Meru; I can convert or transform the abode of Gods into the world of human beings and vice versa (37).

उद्धृत्य पृथिवीं छिद्यामन्नतं नखराग्रकैः ।
ब्रह्मा मां वारयामास सांत्वयन्प्रियभाषितैः ।।३८।।

I can scoop up both the earth and the Sheshnath (the legendary hooded serpent who holds the earth aloft on its hoods) with the tip of my nails and gouge them out from the cosmos. In fact, I had already been doing it when Brahma had come and stopped me (38).

अन्यथा राक्षसमृते नारक्षं जगतीतले ।
सूर्यचन्द्रमसौ भूत्वा तिथिप्रणयनं त्वहम् ।।३९।।

Had it not been so, I would not have allowed anybody to live on this earth except the demons. I would have assumed the role of the Sun and Moon[1] and regulated the occurrence of the various dates of the solar and lunar calendars[2] (39).

[1]सूर्यचन्द्रमसौ भूत्वा, [2]तिथिप्रणयनं त्वहम्

बलाहकत्वमिन्द्रत्वं पृथ्वीसेवादिकाः क्रियाः ।
कुर्या यमत्वं वहित्वं वरुणत्वं धनेशताम् ।।४०।।

I can single handedly assume the role of and carry on the functions[1] of the clouds, such as irrigation of the earth (with the help of timely rains), of Indra (the God who regulates the clouds and rainfall), Yam (the God of death and the one who decides the fate of a dead person), the Fire-God, the Water-God as well as Kuber (who is the treasurer of the heavens)' (40).

[1]क्रियाः कुर्या यमत्वं

इत्येहं बहुधा गर्जन्नाजगामान्तिकं हरेः ।
सेनाध्यक्षा राक्षसेन्द्रा राज्ञा सार्द्धं समागताः ।।४१।।

In this way, roaring and thundering viciously and formidably in a variety of ways[1], that king of demons[2], accompanied by his chief commanders and generals of the army[3], came to the place (in the battlefield) where Sri Hari (Sri Ram)[4] was standing to meet him (41).

[1]बहुधा गर्जन्नाज, [2]राक्षसेन्द्रा, [3]सेनाध्यक्षा, [4]हरेः समागताः

नानाप्रहरणोपेता नानारथपदातिनः ।
एकैकस्यापि पर्याप्ता जगती नेति मन्महे ।।४२।।

All of them were armed with a wide range of different categories of weapons, both offensive as well as defensive[1], and were accompanied by myriad throngs and huge columns of soldiers and warriors riding on chariots as well as marching on foot[2]. Each one of them was so powerful, brave, valiant and strong[3] that none in this world could every hope to stand before them or face them in battle[4] (42).

[1]नानाप्रहरणोपेता, [2]नानारथपदातिनः, [3]एकैकस्यापि पर्याप्ता, [4]जगती नेति मन्महे

केषांचिदपि नामानि भारद्वाज निबोध मे ।
कोटिशो मनसः पूर्णः शलः पालो हलीमुखः ।।४३।।

[Sage Valmiki said to sage Bharadwaj who was listening to the narration of this Ramayan with rapt attention—] 'Oh Bharadwaj! I shall now list the names of some of those prominent chief generals of the demon army; listen carefully. They are— Kotish, Manas, Purna, Shul, Paal, Halimukh (43).

पिच्छलः कौणपश्चक्र कालवेगः प्रकालकः ।
हिरण्यबाहुः शरणः कक्षकः कालदन्तकः ।।४४।।

Pichhal, Kaunap, Chakra, Kalveg, Prakalak, Hiranyavahu, Sharan, Kakshak, Kaldantak (44).

पुच्छाण्डको मण्डलकः पिण्डसेक्ता रभेणकः ।
उच्छिखः करभो भद्रो विश्वजेता विरोहणः ।।४५।।

Puchhandak, Mandalak, Pindasekta, Rabhenak, Uchhikha, Karbho, Bhadro, Vishwajeta, Virohan (45).

शिली शलकरो मूकः सुकुमारः प्ररेषणः ।
मुद्गरः शशरोमा च सुरोमा च महाहनुः ।।४६।।

Shili, Shalkaro, Muk, Sukumar, Prareshan, Mudgar, Sashroma, Suroma, Maha Hanu (46).

पारावतः पारियात्रः पाण्डुरो रोहिणः कृशः ।
विहङ्ग शरभो मोदः प्रमोदः सहतापनः ।।४७।।

Parawat, Pariyatra, Panduro, Rohini, Krisha, Vihang, Sharbho, Mod, Pramod, Sahatapan (47).

कृकर: कुण्डलो वेणी वेणीस्कन्ध: कुमारक: ।
बाहुक: शंखवेगश्च धूर्तक: पातपातकौ ।।४८।।

Krikar, Kundalo, Veni, Veniskandha, Kumarak, Bahuk, Shankhveg, Dhurtak, Paat, Paatak (48).

शंकुकर्ण: पिटरक: कुटीरमुखसेचकौ ।
पूर्णांगद: पूर्णमुख: प्रभाष: शकुलिर्हरि: ।।४९।।

Shankukarn, Pitarak, Kutirmukh, Sechak, Purnangad, Purnamukh, Pravsas, Shakuli, Hari (49).

अमाहिठ: कामठक: सुषेणो मानसी व्यय: ।
भैरवी मुण्डदेवाङ्ग पिशङ्गश्चोडपालक: ।।५०।।

Amahith, Kaamthak, Sushen, Manas, Vyae, Bhairavi, Manad, Devang, Pishang, Udpalak (50).

ऋषभो वेगवान्नाम पिण्डारकमहाहनू ।
रक्ताङ्ग सर्वसारङ्ग: समृद्ध: पाटवासकौ: ।।५१।।

Rishbho, Vegvannam, Pindarak, Maha-hanu, Raktaang, Sarwasaarang, Samridha, Paatvasak (51).

वराहको रावणक: सुचित्रश्चित्रवेगिक: ।
पराशरस्तरुणिको मणिस्कन्धस्तथारुणि: ।।५२।।

Varaahak, Ravanak, Suchitra, Chitravegik, Parashar, Tarunik, Maniskandh and Aaruni (52).

[Note :- The total number of generals of the demon army listed herein above are 88.]

सेनाध्यक्षा महाब्रह्मन्कीर्तिता: कीर्तिवर्धना: ।
प्राधान्येन बहुत्वात्तु न सर्वे परिकीर्तित: ।।५३।।

Oh Brahmin (i.e., Bharadwaj)! These are the ones who have great fame. There are others also, but I have not listed them because the list would become too long (53).

न शक्या: परिसंख्यातु ये युद्धाय समागत: ।
नीलरक्ता सिता घोरा महाकाया महाबला: ।।५४।।
सप्तशीर्षाद्विशीर्षाश्च पञ्चशीर्षास्तथापरे ।
कालानल महाघोरा हुताशसमविग्रहा: ।।५५।।

It is impossible[1] to put a number or a count[2] to those who had come to fight Sri Ram[3]. They were of all shapes and had different forms—some had the countenance as if their blood was blue (i.e., had poison flowing through their veins)[4], others were whitish in complexion[5]. They were all very terrible, fearsome, formidable and horrible to look at[6], had huge and colossus bodies[7], and were most strong, brave, valiant and courageous[8] (54). Some had seven and some others had two heads[9], while still others had five heads on their bodies[10]. They were most ferocious like the fire of the doomsday[11]; they had bodies resembling a fiercely raging fire[12] (55). [54-55]

[1]न शक्या:, [2]परिसंख्यातु, [3]ये युद्धाय समागत:, [4]नीलरक्ता, [5]सिता, [6]घोरा, [7]महाकाया, [8]महाबला:, [9]सप्तशीर्षाद्विशीर्षाश्च, [10]पञ्चशीर्षा, [11]कालानल महाघोरा, [12]हुताशसमविग्रहा:

महाकाया महावेगा: शेलश्रृङ्गसमुच्छ्रया: ।
योजनायामविस्तीर्णाद्वियोजनसमुच्छ्रया: ।।५६।।

They had great, colossus and huge bodies[1]. They were very swift, agile and active in the battlefield[2]. They were tall and robust like the summit of huge mountains[3]. Their chests measured 2 Yojans across (i.e., their chest measured 8 x 2 = 16 miles across)[4], and their height was about 1 Yojan (8 miles)[5] (56).

[1]महाकाया, [2]महावेगा:, [3]शेलश्रृङ्गसमुच्छ्रया:, [4]योजनायामविस्तीर्णा, [5]द्वियोजनसमुच्छ्रया:

कामरूपा: कामबला दीप्तानलसमत्विष: ।
अन्ये च बहव: शूरा: शूलपट्टिशधारिण: ।।५७।।

They could assume any form they wished[1] and acquired any amount of strength as they needed[2]. Their radiance resembled the fierce heat of a burning fire[3]. They were brave, valiant, courageous and strong[4]. They were well armed to the teeth by numerous pointed weapons called Shul (literally, weapons which were needle sharp; here referring to spears, spikes, lancets etc.)[5] and carried corresponding shields for protection[6] (57).

[1]कामरूपा:, [2]कामबला, [3]दीप्तानलसमत्विष:, [4]शूरा:, [5]शूल, [6]पट्टिशधारिण:

दिव्य प्रहरणोपेता नानावेषविभूषिता: ।
श्रृणु नामानि चान्येषां येऽन्ये रावणसैनिका: ।।५८।।

They were well armed with different varieties of magnificent and fascinating weapons, arms and armaments, offensive as well as defensive[1]. They had myriad countenance, faces and attires, and they wore as many number of decorations and honours (that they had acquired due to their accomplishments and exploits during earlier wars)[2].

Now listen to some of the names of the commanders of Ravana's army[3] (these were not the generals; they were commanders of the different units or wings of the huge demon army) (58).

[1]दिव्य प्रहरणोपेता, [2]नानावेषविभूषिता:, [3]रावणसैनिका:

शंकुकर्णोनिकुम्भश्च पद्म: कुमुद एव च ।
अनन्तो द्वादशभुजस्तथा कृष्णोपकृष्णकौ ।।५९।।

Sankukarn, Nikumbha, Padma, Kumud, Anant, Dwadashbhuj, Krishna, Upkrishna (59).

घ्राणश्रवा: कपिस्कन्ध: काञ्चनाक्षो जलन्धम: ।
अक्षसन्तर्दनो ब्रह्मन्कुनदीकस्तमोऽभ्रकृत ।।६०।।

Ghranshrawa, Kapiskandh, Kanchanaksha, Jalandham, Akshasantrdan, Brahmaankundik, Takpobhrakrit (60).

एकाक्षो द्वादशाक्षश्च तथैवैकजटाभिध: ।
सहस्रबाहुर्विकटो व्याघ्राख्य क्षितिकम्पन: ।।६१।।

Ekaksha, Dwadasaksha, Ekjata, Sahastrabahu, Vikat, Vyaghra, Kshitikampan (61).

पुण्यनामानुनामा च सुवक्त्र: प्रियदर्शन: ।
परिश्रित: कोकनद: प्रियमाल्यानुलेपन: ।।६२।।

Punyanaam, Anunaam, Suvaktra, Priyadarshan, Parishrit, Koknad, Priyamalyanulepan (62).

अजोदरो गजशिरा: सकन्धाक्ष: शतलोचन: ।
ज्वालाजिह्व: करालश्च सितकेशो जटी हरि: ।।६३।।

Ajodar, Gajshir, Skandaksha, Shatlochan, Jwalajivha, Karaal, Sitkesh, Jeti, Hari (63).

चतुर्दंष्ट्रोष्ठजिह्वश्च मेघनाद: पृथुश्रवा: ।
विकृताक्षो धनुर्वक्त्रो जाठरो मारुताशन: ।।६४।।

Chaturdrast, Ostajivaha, Meghnand, Pritushrawa, Vikritaksha, Dhanuvaktra, Jaathar, Marutashan (64).

उदाराक्षो रथाक्षश्च वज्रनाभो वसुप्रभ: ।
समुद्रवेगो विप्रेन्द्र: शैलकम्पी तथैव च ।।६५।।

Udaraksho, Rathaksha, Vajranabho, Vasuprabha, Samudraveg, Viprendra, Shailkampi (65).

वृषमेंषप्रवाहश्च तथा नान्दोपनन्दकौ ।
धूम्रश्वेत: कलिङ्गश्च सिद्धार्थे वरदस्था ।।६६।।

Vris-Mesh-Pravaha, Nand, Upnand, Dhumra Shwet, Kaling, Siddharth, Varad (66).

प्रियकश्चैकनन्दश्च गोनन्दश्च प्रतापवान् ।
आनन्दश्च प्रमोदश्च स्वस्तिको ध्रुवकस्तथा ।।६७।।

Priyak, Eknand, Gonand, Pratapvan, Anand, Pramod, Swastik, Dhruvak (67).

क्षेमबाहु: सुबाहुश्च सिद्धपात्र सुव्रत: ।
गोव्रज: कनकापीडो महापारिषदेश्वर: ।।६८।।

Kshembahu, Subahu, Siddhapatra, Suvrat, Govraj, Kankapid, Mahapari-shadeshwar (68).

गायनो दमनश्चैव: बाण: खङ्गश्च वीर्यवान् ।
वैताली गतिताली च तथा कथकवातिकौ ।।६९।।

Gaayeno, Daman, Vaan, Khang, Viryavan, Vaitali, Gatitali, Kathak, Vatiko (69).

हंसज: पङ्कदिग्धाङ्ग: समुद्रोन्मादनश्च ह ।
रणोत्कट: प्रहासश्च वेतसिद्धश्च नन्दक: ।।७०।।

Hansaj, Pankadi, Dhang, Samudra, Unmaadan, Ranotakt, Prahaas, Vetsidha and Nandak (70).

[Note :- The total number of commanders of the different units of the demon army comes to 93.]

एते पुरा रावणसैन्यपाला नानायुधप्राहरणा रणेषु ।
हंसेषु मेषेषु वृषेपु वीरा रामं प्रतस्तु: कृतसिंहनादा: ।।७१।।

All these great brave generals and commanders of Ravana's army armed themselves to the teeth with a wide range and different varieties of offensive and defensive weapons. They rode on swans[1], he goats or rams[2] as well as on buffaloes and bulls[3], roared and thundered like angry lions[4], and came out of the city to the battlefield to face Sri Ram (71).

Thus ends Canto 18 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing Sri Ram's arrival with his army to challenge the 1000-headed Ravana at Pushkar and the departure of the latter's army to meet the challenge.

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Canto 19
The description of the sons of the 1000-headed Ravana and his army (contd. from canto 18)

This canto is an extension of the previous canto no. 18. It not only lists the name of 54 sons of Ravana but also describes his many million strong army of demons in great detail. The army looked most horrendous, terrifying, grotesque and abominable. It consisted of all forms of fearful creatures except humans, and included ghosts and phantoms, birds of prey and other birds of varying denominations, as well as poisonous snakes and other reptiles, monkey faced animals, besides lions, jackals, elephants, horses, donkeys, bulls and buffaloes.

रावणस्यौरसाः पुत्रास्सह राक्षसपुङ्गवैः ।
नानाप्रहरणोपेता दुद्रुचु राघवं रणे ।।१।।

The sons of Ravana[1] were accompanied by other great senior demons who were all excellent amongst their race[2]. They were all well armed to the teeth with different varieties of arms and armaments[3], and they together made an assault on Raghav (Sri Ram) in the battlefield[4] (1).

[1]रावणस्यौरसाः, [2]स्सह राक्षसपुङ्गवैः, [3]नानाप्रहरणोपेता, [4]दुद्रुचु राघवं रणे

नामान्येषां प्रवक्ष्यामि भरद्वाज शृणुष्व मे ।
कालकण्ठ प्रभाषश्च तथा कुम्भाण्डको परः ।।२।।

Oh Bharadwaj! I shall tell you the names of all his (Ravana's) sons. Listen carefully— Kalkanth, Prabhau, Kumbhandak (2).

कालकक्ष शितश्चैव भूतलोन्मथनस्तथा ।
यज्ञबाहु प्रबाहुश्च देवयाजी च सोमपः ।।३।।

Kalkaksha, Sheet, Bhutal, Unmathan, Yagyabhahu, Prabahu, Devyaji, Somap (3).

मज्जालश्च महातेजाः क्रथः क्रथोवसुव्रतः ।
तुहरश्च तुहाराश्च चित्रदेवश्च वीर्यवान् ।।४।।

Majjaal, Maha Teja, Krath, Kraath, Vasuvrath, Tuhar, Tuhaar, Chitradev, Viryawaan (4).

मधुरः सुप्रासादाश्च किरीटश्च महाबलः ।
वसनो मधुवर्णश्च कलशोदर एव च ।।५।।

Madhur, Suprasad, Kirit, Mahabal, Vasano, Madhuvarna, Kalshodar (5).

धर्मदो मन्मथकरः सूचीवक्त्रश्च वीर्यवान् ।
श्वेतवक्त्रश्च सुवक्त्रश्च चारुवक्त्रश्च पाण्डुरः ।।६।।

Dharmad, Manmathkar, Suchivaktra, Viryawan, Shwetvaktra, Suvaktra, Charuvaktra, Pandur (6).

दण्डबाहुः सुबाहुश्च रजः कोकिलकस्तथा ।
अचलः कालकाक्षश्च बालेशो बालभक्षकः ।।७।।

Dandbahu, Subahu, Raj, Kokilak, Achal, Kaalkaksha, Baalesh, Baalbhakshak (7).

समश्चानकः कोकनदो गृध्रपत्रश्च जम्बुकः ।।
लोहाजवक्त्रो जवन कुम्भवक्त्रश्च कुम्भकः ।।८।।

Samchanak, Koknad, Gridhpad, Jambuk, Lohajvaktra, Javan, Kumbhvaktra, Kumbhak (8).

मुण्डीग्रीवश्च कृष्णौजा हंसवक्त्रश्च कुञ्जरः ।
एते रावणात्राश्च महावीरपराक्रमाः ।।९।।

Manadgriv, Krishnaoj, Hansavaktra and Kunjar.

All these sons of Ravana (listed from verse nos. 2 to 9) were very brave, courageous, valiant, strong, powerful, potent and formidable in battle. They possessed immense glory and fame in this respect[1] (9).

[1]महावीरपराक्रमाः

[Note :- The total number of his sons = 55.]

बाहुशब्दैः सिंहनादैः पूरयन्तो दिशो दश ।
एषां सैन्यसहस्राणां सहस्राण्यर्बुदानि च ।।१०।।

Filling all the corners of the 10 directions of the compass[1] with the fearful tumult created by the clamour and clanging of their arms and armaments[2] and the thunder of their chilling lion-like roar[3], the demon army consisted of thousands and millions of such ferocious and fearsome warriors[4] (10).

[1]पूरयन्तो दिशो दश, [2]बाहुशब्दैः, [3]सिंहनादैः, [4]सैन्यसहस्राणां सहस्राण्यर्बुदानि

नानाकृतिवयोरूपा विविधायुधपाणयः ।

कूर्मकुक्कुटवक्त्राश्च सर्वजम्भकवक्त्रका: ।।११।।

The warriors had myriad of countenance and features, shapes and forms, and were of different age groups[1]. They held different types of potent arms and armaments[2]'.

[Now sage Valmiki describes the faces of the demons to give an idea of the wide range of the horrifying creatures that aligned themselves against Sri Ram's army which consisted of humans, monkeys who had come with Sugriv, bears who had accompanied Jamvant and selected demons who were loyal to Vibhishan.] 'The warriors had faces resembling those of a tortoise, cock, serpent— (11).

[1]नानाकृतिवयोरूपा, [2]विविधायुधपाणय:

गोमायुमुखक्वत्राश्च शशोलूकमुखास्तथा ।
खरोष्ट्रवदनाश्चैव वराहवदनास्तथा ।।१२।।

—cow, hare, owl, camel, boar— (12).

मनुष्यमेषवक्त्राश्च शृगालवदनास्तथा ।
मार्जारशशवक्त्राश्च दीर्घवक्त्राश्च केचन ।।१३।।

—humans, ram or sheep, Jackal, porqupine as well as the large faced cats, such as a tiger and leopard— (13).

नकुलोलूकवक्त्रश्च काकवक्त्रास्तथापरे ।
आखुबभ्रुकवक्त्राश्च मयूरवदनास्तथा ।।१४।।

—mongoose, owl, crow, rat, swine, ape (or Babhrak—), peacock— (14).

मत्स्यमेषाननवाश्चैव अजाविमहिषानना: ।
ऋक्षशार्दूलवक्त्राश्च द्वीपिसिंहाननास्तथा ।।१५।।

—fish (large and small), goat, buffalo, bear and tiger or lion faced. They resembled lions or tigers seated on a throne[1], crouching and ready to pounce on their prey (15).

[Note :- [1]The word 'Singhasan' and its prefix 'dwip' 'द्वीपिसिंहाननास्तथा' indicates this posture, much like the 'phoenix'.]

भीमा गजाननाश्चैव तथा नक्रमुखास्तथा ।
गोखरोष्ट्रमुखाश्चान्ये वृषदंशमुखास्तथा ।।१६।।

Some had faces resembling those of mammoth elephants while others were like ferocious crocodiles or alligators. Still others were like cows, donkeys, camels, huge bulls and other creatures with

jaws having a row of sharp and pointed teeth (16).

महाजठरपादाङ्गा: स्तवकाक्षाश्च दुर्मुखा: ।
पारावतमुखाश्चान्ये तथा वृषमुखा: परे ।।१७।।

Some had huge, bloated abdomens, long legs and big eyes, others had horrible faces like a weight of lead resembling the face of a hefty, supernatural bull (17).

कोकिलाभाननाश्चान्ये श्येनतित्तिरिकानना: ।
कृकलासमुखश्चैव विरजोऽम्बरधारिण: ।।१८।।

Some had faces like different types of birds, such as a cuckoo, a hawk and a partridge; others were like a garden lizard. They wore white attire (battle gear) (18).

व्यासवक्त्रा: शुकमुखाश्चण्डवक्त्रा शुभानना: ।
आशीविषाश्चीरधरा गोनासावरणास्तथा ।।१९।।

Some had wide circular mouths such as those of snakes; others had mouths like that of a parrot. Some had tonsured heads, while others had pleasant looking ones. Some resembled snakes. Some wore clothes (and some were naked). Some had countenance like that of a Gonasa (a type of serpent) (19).

स्थूलोदरा: कृशाङ्गाश्च स्थूलाङ्गाश्च कृशोदरा: ।
ह्स्वग्रीवा महाकर्णा नानाव्यालविभूषणा: ।।२०।।

Some had rounded potbellies; others had emaciated body and stomach. Some head necks like that of a horse; others had large fan-like ears (like that of an elephant). Many wore ornaments consisting of snakes (and other such fearsome reptiles) (20).

गजेन्द्रचर्मवसनास्तथा कृष्णाजिनाम्बरा: ।
स्कन्धेमुखा द्विजश्रेष्ठ तथा ह्युदरतोमुखा: ।।२१।।

Some wore hide of elephant, while others wore black skin. Oh exalted sage (Bharadwaj)! Some had their mouth embedded in their shoulders, while others had it in their stomach (21).

पृष्ठमुखा हनुमुखास्तथा जङ्घामुखास्तथा ।
पार्श्वाननाश्च बहवो नानादेशमुखास्तथा ।।२२।।

Some had their mouths on their back, some were monkey faced. The mouths of others were on their thighs or their sides and at various others parts of the body (22).

तथा कीटपतङ्गानां सदृशास्या महाबलाः ।
नानाव्यालमुखाश्चान्ये बहुबाहुशिरोधराः ।।२३।।

Some had their faces like those of insects and worms. All were very brave, strong, potent and valiant. There were some who had faces like the most terrifying snakes or lions. Then there were those who had numerous arms or countless heads (23).

[Note :- The word 'Vyal' 'व्याल' in the text means both a snake as well as a lion.]

नानावक्षोभुजाः केचिद्भुजङ्गवदनाः परे ।
खङ्गमुखा वृकमुखा अपरे गरुड़ाननाः ।।२४।।

Then there were those who had many and varied shapes of their chests and arms. Many had python-like faces, some had bird like faces resembling a crow, while others were like Garud (the legendary eagle or heron who is the mount of Lord Vishnu) (24).

[Note :- The word 'Vrik' 'वृक' means a jackal or a wolf as well as a crow. In the present context, since birds are being referred to, the meaning has been interpreted as 'crow-like' instead of a jackal or a wolf. See also verse no. 31.]

चोलसंवृतगात्राश्च नानाफलकवाससः ।
नानावेषधराश्चान्ये नानामाल्यानुलेपनाः ।।२५।।

[Their attires were also as fascinating as their bodies and appearances.] Some wore long cloaks designed like a long loose shirt[1], while others had straight jackets resembling an armour[2]. They had so many types of attires that they cannot be described and were as varied as that army of demons. Some wore numerous types of garlands and necklaces[3] and had rubbed or smeared a wide variety of pastes on their bodies[4] (25).

[1]चोल, [2]फलकवाससः, [3]नानामाल्य, [4]यानुलेपनाः

नानावस्त्रधराश्चान्ये चर्मवासस एव च ।
उष्णीषिणो मुकुटिनः कम्बुग्रीवाः सुवर्चसः ।।२६।।

They wore innumerable variety of clothes and hides, crowns and headgears. They had necks resembling a conch and had glorious radiance effusing from them (26).

किरीटिनः पञ्चशिखास्तथा कठिनमूर्द्धजाः ।
त्रिशिखा द्विशिखश्चैव तथा सप्तशिखा अपि ।।२७।।

The 'Kirits'[1] (diadems or crests or tiaras) worn on their heads were of varying numbers (depending upon the number of heads they had as well as their designation and rank in the hierarchy of the army) —some had five, some three, two or even seven. They had strong and robust heads[2] (27).

[1]किरीटिनः, [2]कठिनमूर्द्धजाः

शिखण्डिनोऽमुकुटिनो मुण्डाश्च जटिलास्तथा ।
चित्रमालाधराः केचित्केचिद्रोमाननास्तथा ।।२८।।

Some had a plume of hair on their heads and they didn't need to wear a crown, while others were bald and looked most formidable. They wore attractive garlands and necklaces. There were some who had hairs on their faces. [That is, they had long beards or mustaches.] (28)

विग्रहैकवशा नित्यमजेयाः सुरसत्तमैः ।
कृष्णा निर्मासवक्त्राश्च दीर्घपृष्ठा निरूदराः ।।२९।।

They were always invincible even at the hands of Gods in a war. They were black complexioned. Some had faces with no flesh and muscles on them, i.e., there were only bones in their faces, while others had a large back with no abdomen. [That is, they had no belly, and like their faces, only the ribs and backbone was visible, that too protruded out like a bulge facing backwards.] (29)

दीर्घपृष्ठा स्थूलपृष्ठाः प्रलम्बोदरमेहनाः ।
महाभुजा ह्रस्वभुजा ह्रस्वगाताश्च वामनाः ।।३०।।

Some had huge, broad and wide backs, while some had fleshy backs (as compared to their counterparts with a skeleton-like back as described in verse no. 29). Some had swollen bellies which bulged out and hung down like an overweight and stuffed gunny bag so much so that they had difficulty in walking or had to make an effort to carry their own weight. Some had huge and robust arms with both the biceps and the hands resembling the front legs of an elephant. Some were dwarfish in stature (30).

कुब्जाश्च ह्रस्वजङ्घाश्च हस्तिकर्णशिरोधराः ।
हस्तिनासाः कूर्मनासा वृकनासास्तथापरे ।।३१।।

Some were haunch-backed. Some had thighs, ears and heads resembling that of an elephant. Some had noses like that of an

elephant's trunk or like a tortoise's snout or like that of a jackal or a wolf (31).

[Note :- The word 'Vrik' 'वृक' means a crow as well as a jackal or a wolf as has been noted earlier in verse no. 24. In the present context where different animals are cited, the interpretation of a jackal or a wolf is more appropriate as compared to verse no. 24 where birds were cited.]

वारणेन्द्रनिभाश्चान्ये दीप्तिमन्तः स्वलंकृताः ।
पिङ्गाक्षाः शंकुकर्णाश्च वक्रनासास्तथापरे ।।३२।।

Some had pointed noses like an arrow. Others were magnificent and glorious to look at with all their decorations and honours[1]. Some had yellow-tinged eyes; some had pointed ears (protruding out from their faces like spikes from the axle of battle chariots); some had distorted noses (32).

[1]दीप्तिमन्तः स्वलंकृताः

पृथुदंष्ट्राः महादंष्ट्राः स्थूलोष्ठ हरिमूर्द्धजाः ।
नानापादौष्ठदंष्ट्राश्च नानाहस्तशिरोधरा ।।३३।।

Some had large teeth, while others had horrible and terrible looking teeth. Some had flabby, thick lips and heavy, large heads which were as large as mountains. Then there were those who had many legs, lips, rows of teeth, hands and heads (33).

[Note :- The word 'Hari' 'हरि' used to describe their heads (हरिमूर्द्धजा) has many connotations—such as Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind, monkey, lion, peacock, snake, horse, earth, name of a mountain. But the last meaning, 'a mountain' seems the most appropriate one in the context in which the word 'Hari' has been used here to describe their large heads.]

नानाचर्मभिराच्छन्ना नानावासाश्च सुव्रत ।
हृष्टाः परिपतन्ति स्म महापरिध बाहवः ।।३४।।

Oh the righteous one (a reference to Bharadwaj)! Covered by many types of animal hides as protective gears and wearing numerous varieties of attires used as armours, the fierce warriors of the demon army who had arms resembling Parighs (spears, lancets and spikes which have a long handle), started off cheerfully for battle (34).

दीर्घग्रीवा दीर्घनखा दीर्घपादशिरोभुजाः ।
पिङ्गाक्षा नीलकण्ठाश्च स्वर्णकर्णाश्च सुव्रत ।।३५।।

[Sage Valmiki continues with his vivid description of the demons who had accompanied the 1000-headed Ravana to the battlefield.]

Of the righteous one! Some had large necks, some had large nails, some had large feet, some had large heads and arms. Some had yellow eyes, some blue tinged necks and some had golden ears! (35).

वृकोदरनिभाः केचित्केचिदञ्जनसन्निभाः ।
श्वेताक्षा लोहितग्रीवा पिङ्गाक्षाश्चतथापरे ।।३६।।

Some had stomach like that of a Vrik[1]; others were like huge mountains. Some had white coloured eyes, others had yellow ones. Some had red hued coloured necks (as compared to their friends who were blue-necked as in verse no. 35) (36).

[Note :- [1]The word 'Vrik' 'वृक' means a Kshatriya besides a jackal, a wolf and a crow as cited previously in verse nos. 24 and 31. These latter meanings fit into verse nos. 31 and 24 respectively, but a 'Kshatriya' is the meaning which fits best in the context of the present verse. So we can say that they were like brave Kshatriya warriors with muscular stomachs instead of flabby ones.]

कल्माषबाहवो विप्र चित्रवर्णाश्च केचन ।
चामरापीडकनिभाः श्वेत लोहितकान्तयः ।।३७।।

Oh Brahmin (Bharadwaj)! Some had black or striped arms (like the stripes present on a tiger or a zebra), some had multicoloured complexion. Some had arms resembling that of a peacock's plume or a whisk with a white handle and black or dark feathers. [That is, their fore arms were white like the stalk of a peacock's feather while their palms spread out like its apex and were dark in colour like the plume's hairs or the upper part of a whisk.] (37)

नानावर्णाः सुवर्णाश्च मयूरसदृशप्रभाः ।
पाशोद्यतकराः केचिद्यादितास्याः खराननाः ।।३८।।

Having a wide variety of shades of complexions, some looked golden while others were as charming as the peacock. Some held a chain-trap, a noose or a sling in their hands, while others opened

their mouths wide and held sharp battle pickaxes in them (38).

शतघ्नीचक्रहस्ताश्च तथा मुसलपाणयः ।
असिमुद्‌गरहस्ताश्च दण्डहस्ताश्च केचन ।।३९।।

Some held 'Shataghni' (an ancient weapon of war)[1] and Chakra (a razor sharp-edged circular offensive weapon used by throwing at the enemy; it rotated while in flight and sliced through the enemy's body much like a saw)[2] in their hands; others held hammer-like pounders or rammers called Musal (to crush the enemy)[3] Mudgar (a dumb-bell used to batter and pound the enemy)[4] and batons[5] in their hands besides strong and sharp edged spears or lancets[6] (39).

[1]शतघ्नी, [2]चक्र, [3]मुसल, [4]असि, [5]मुद्‌गर, [6]दण्ड

गदाभुशुण्डिहस्ताश्च तथा तोमरपाणयः ।
आयुवैर्विविधैर्घोरैर्महात्मनो महौजसः ।।४०।।

They held war maces called Gada[1], Bhushund[2] and Tomar (a spear like weapon with large hammer like head)[3] in their hands besides holding many other types of magnificent, potent and fierce arms and armaments[4]. With their formidable weapons, the great demon army looked very ferocious, potent, powerful, majestic and invincible[5] (40).

[1]गदा, [2]भुशुण्डि, [3]तोमर, [4]आयुवैर्विविधैर्घोरै, [5]र्महात्मनो महौजसः

महाबला महावेगा असंख्याता विनिर्ययुः ।
घण्टाजालपिनद्धाङ्गा नमृतुस्ते रणाजिरे ।।४१।।

The army had great strength and punch; it was very powerful and potential[1]. It moved with great force and speed[2]. Its numbers were uncountable[3]. It danced furiously and crazily[4] in the battlefield[5] to the accompaniment of the beating of the war drums and gongs[6] (41).

[1]महाबला, [2]महावेगा, [3]असंख्याता, [4]नमृतुस्ते, [5]रणाजिरे, [6]घण्टाजालपिनद्धाङ्गा

कोटिशो विकृतरूक्षभाषिणो यातुधानगणसैन्यपालकाः ।
दुद्रुवू रघुकुलावतंसकं गृहधावनपोथवादिनः ।।४२।।

Millions[1] of ugly and horrible looking[2] demon warriors and their commanders and generals who were most rude, arrogant and impolite when they spoke[3], attacked Sri Ram from all sides, shouting, thundering and yelling loudly, chillingly and sternly, 'catch them, catch them', as they dashed and lunged forward to launce the offensive[4] against him (Sri Ram) who was the caretaker, sustainer, protector and well-wisher of not only his own clan of Raghu but

also that of the demon army (because Sri Ram is the merciful, compassionate, magnanimous, benevolent and benefactor Supreme Being of the universe, and he has launched this campaign just in order to get rid of fierce and cruel demons who were tormenting other creatures of the world, and surely not the good ones amongst them as is evident from the fact that he had the 10-headed Ravana's younger brother Vibhishan, who was also of the demons race, with him)[5] (42).

[1]कोटिशो, [2]विकृत, [3]रूक्षभाषिणो, [4]गृहधावनपोथवादिनः, [5]रघुकुलावतंसकं सैन्यपालकाः

Thus ends Canto 19 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the demon army and the launch of the offensive in the war.

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Canto 20
The war—its description

This Canto describes the battle between the armies of Sri Ram and the 1000-headed Ravana in the first phase of the war. It was a closely fought, one to one duel, ruthless and merciless as any battle is. In the end however, the monkeys got an upper hand over the demons, though the latter far outnumbered the former.

धनूंषि च विधुन्वानस्ततो वैश्रवणानुजः ।
कोऽयं किमर्थमायात इति चिनतापरोऽभवत् ।।१।।

Then that 'junior Vaisrawan' (i.e., the son of sage Visrawa; here meaning the thousand headed Ravana)[1] twanged his formidable bow and wondered in amazement, 'Who is this fellow, and why has he come?' (1).

[1]वैश्रवणानुजः

[Note :- [1]A father's son is called a junior or the younger one with the same surname. The word 'Anuj' 'अनुज' generally means a younger brother, but since the 10-headed Ravana was the younger sibling (see Canto 17, verse no. 42), here the word refers to the 'junior Visrawa' or the son of sage Visrawa. See also verse no. 3.]

ततो गगनसम्भूता वाणी समुद्यत ।
भो रावण महावीर्य रामोऽयं समुपागतः ।।२।।

At this, an invisible voice from the sky said[1], 'Oh the most brave and gallant Ravana! This is Sri Ram who has come here! (2).

[1]गगनसम्भूता वाणी

राघवोऽयमयोध्याया राजा धर्मस्वरूपधृक् ।
लङ्कायां निहतो येन दाराकर्षी तवानुजः ।।३।।

He is also known as Raghav, the king of Ayodhya. He is an embodiment of the virtues known collectively as 'Dharma' (i.e., he personifies all that is righteous, noble, good and virtuous in this world)[1]. He is the one who has slayed your younger brother[2] in Lanka (3).

[1]धर्मस्वरूप, [2]तवानुजः निहतो

त्वद्बाधार्थमिहायातो विभीषण वसुप्रदः ।
भ्रातृभिर्वानरैर्ऋक्षै राक्षसैर्मानुषैर्युतः ।।४।।

He is the one who has given the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhishan (after killing the 10-headed Ravana). He has arrived here to slay you too[1]; he is accompanied by his brothers, monkeys (the army of Sugriv), bears (the army of Jamvant), demons (owing allegiance to Vibhishan) and humans (the army of Ayodhya)' (4).

[1]त्वद्बाधार्थमिहायातो

श्रुत्वा ह्यमानुषं वाक्यं रावणो लोकरावणः ।
क्रोधमाहारयामास द्विगुण मुनिपुङ्गव ।।५।।

Oh exalted sage (Bharadwaj)! Hearing this super human voice (or a non-human voice coming from some supernatural hidden source)[1], Ravana, who was famous as the one who made the world weep and wail[2], became twice as much angry and annoyed as he was before[3]. He said most contemptuously and vehemently— (5).

[1]ह्यमानुषं वाक्यं, [2]रावणो लोकरावणः, [3]द्विगुण क्रोध

हन्यतां वध्यतामेष मानुषो रिपुसंज्ञितः ।
मम विश्वजितः साक्षाद्रणाय समुपस्थितः ।।६।।

'Beat back and thrash this human enemy[1]; kill him. He has dared to come and fight with me who am 'the vanquisher and conqueror of the entire world'[2]' (6).

[1]मानुषो रिपुसंज्ञितः, [2]मम विश्वजितः

इत्युक्त्वा बाणजालाति चक्रपर्वत तोमरान् ।
चिक्षेप सहसा रक्षः पुष्पकोपरि सुव्रतः ।।७।।

Oh the righteous one[1]! Saying this, that demon showered various weapons upon Sri Ram, such as a torrent of arrows which formed a net around him[2], Chakras (razor sharp, serrated discus)[3], mountains or huge boulders[4] and Tomars (large spear-like weapon with a hammer-like head)[5] etc. on the Pushpak chariot-cum-plane (upon which Sri Ram sat in the battlefield)[6] (7).

[1]सुव्रतः, [2]बाणजालाति, [3]चक्र, [4]पर्वत, [5]तोमरान्, [6]पुष्पकोपरि

[Note :- This divine plane of the Gods, called Pushpak, had the great ability to metamorphose into a war chariot when felt necessary. Primarily, it was an air plane.]

राक्षसी सा चमूर्घोरा वानरानृक्षमानुषान् ।
चखादकांश्चिदपरान्पोथयामासदर्पितान् ।।८।।

His (Ravana's) most formidable and fierce demon army began their ruthless attack upon Sri Ram's army, devouring and gobbling up some of the monkeys, bears and humans and destroying others by killing them (8).

सा च शाखामृगी सेनाराघवस्य च मानुषी ।
रावणस्यानुगान्वीराञ्जघान बाणपर्वतैः ।।९।।

Repulsing the attack, Raghav's army consisting of humans and monkeys started to crush Ravana's brave warriors with their own arrows and mountains thrown at them in retaliation (9).

तेऽन्योन्यवधमिच्छन्तो युयुधुः सैनिकोत्तमाः ।
पेतुम्लुश्च मुमुहू राक्षसा वानरा नराः ।।१०।।

These two excellent armies crashed into each other headlong, fighting and hitting the opponent with the intention to kill[1]. [That is, they fought most mercilessly, ruthlessly, uncompromisingly, viciously and ferociously.] Demons as well as monkeys and human began to fall down in the fierce battle that ensued as they got repeatedly and gravely wounded[2] in the attacks (10).

[1]वधमिच्छन्तो, [2]पेतुम्लुश्च मुमुहू

ततो रामो महाबाहुर्भरतो लक्ष्मणस्तथा ।

शत्रुघ्नो हनुमान्वीरः सुग्रीवो जाम्बवांस्तथा ।।११।।
अन्ये च नलनीलाद्या विभीषणपुरोगमाः ।
युयुधस्ते महाघोरं महाघोरे रणाजिरे ।।१२।।

Seeing their army being ruthlessly beaten and getting crushed and falling apart, the most brave Sri Ram who was strong at arms[1], accompanied by Bharat, Laxman, Shatrughan, the brave Hanuman, Sugriv, Jamvant (11) and others, including Nal, Neel and Vibhishan, moved forward and started to fight the most formidable and terrible battle[2] themselves (12). [11-12]

[1]रामो महाबाहु, [2]युयुधस्ते महाघोरं महाघोरे

निर्जग्मुश्च विनेदुश्च चिक्रोडुश्चैव राक्षसाः ।
जहृषुश्च महात्मानः संग्रामेष्वनिवर्तिनः ।।१३।।

They came out in the open, and raising a tumultuous and chilling war cry, they began to play a game or sport[1] with the demons. Those great warriors had a formidable reputation that they never turned their backs in the battlefield (or they never shied or ran away in the face of the enemy)[2]. Those great souls[3] greatly enjoyed playing this game of war[4] with their equally strong and powerful, aggressive opponents (13).

[1]चिक्रोडुश्चैव, [2]संग्रामेष्वनिवर्तिनः, [3]महात्मानः, [4]जहृषुश्च

उत्कृष्टा स्फोटितैर्नादैश्चचालेव च मेदिनी ।
रक्षसां सिंहनादैश्च परिपूर्ण नभः स्थलम् ।।१४।।

Their exuberant, thunderous and chilling war cry and shrill yells[1] made the earth shake and tremble[2]. The sky and the land reverberated[3] with the lion-like roar raised by the demons[4] (14).

[1]उत्कृष्टा स्फोटितैर्नादै, [2]दैश्चचालेव, [3]परिपूर्ण नभः स्थलम्, [4]रक्षसां सिंहनादैश्च

ते प्रायुध्यंत मुदितो राक्षसेन्द्रा महाबलाः ।
प्रययुर्वानरानीकं समुद्यतशिलायुधम् ।।१५।।

The most strong, powerful and valiant demons fought cheerfully[1]. They took large rocks and boulders[2] in their hands and moved towards the monkey army menacingly (15).

[1]प्रायुध्यंत मुदितो, [2]शिलायुधम्

युयोध राक्षसं सैन्यं नरराक्षसवानरैः ।
रहस्त्यश्वरथसम्बाधं किंकिणीशतनादितम् ।।१६।।

The enemy demon army (of the 1000-headed Ravana) fought with the army of humans, demons (owing allegiance to Vibhishan) and monkeys (the army of Sugriv), i.e., the army of Sri Ram. There was a horrifying, clamorous cacophony of sounds made by war elephant, horses and chariots as well as the clanking of hundreds of bracelets as opponents fought a hand to hand duel (16).

नीलजीमूतसङ्काशैः समुद्यतशिलायुधैः ।
दीप्तानलविप्रख्यैर्नैर्ऋतैः सर्वतो वृतम् ।।१७।।

Holding huge boulders[1] resembling dark blue clouds (i.e., the rain bearing clouds appearing during the rainy season)[2], the demons who resembled a fiercely burning fire by their ferocity and furious demeanours[3] or even a relentlessly scorching sun[4], filled all the direction of the battlefield, surrounding or encircling it from all the sides[5] (17).

[1]समुद्यतशिलायुधैः, [2]नीलजीमूतसङ्काशैः, [3]दीप्तानल, [4]विप्रख्यैर्नैर्ऋतैः, [5]सर्वतो वृतम्

[Note :- The allegory to the clouds is very apt here. During the rainy season, dark clouds appear from the horizon and cover the entire canopy of the sky. Similarly, the demons here covered the entire area of the battlefield from all the sides, thundering and roaring like the rumbling of those clouds and the clap of thunder.]

तद्वीक्ष्य राक्षसबलं संरब्धाश्च प्लवङ्गमाः ।
क्रुद्धं तद्राक्षसं सैन्यं जघ्नुर्द्रुमशिलायुधैः ।।१८।।

Seeing the powerful force of the demon army, the monkeys became very furious and gathered themselves together. They retaliated by pounding the demons with huge trees and boulders (18).

ते पादशिलाशैलैस्तां चक्रुर्वृष्टिमुत्तमाम् ।
वृक्षौर्घवजसङ्काशैर्हरयो भीमविक्रमाः ।।१९।।
शिखरैः शिखराभांस्ते यातुधानानमर्दयन् ।
निर्जघ्नुःसमरे क्रुद्धा हरयो राक्षसर्षभान् ।।२०।।

They (the monkeys) rained trees, boulders, rocks and arrows upon the enemy. Those most terrible, formidable and gallant monkeys fought the demons with trees (using them as batons, battering rams and Tomars, the long handled hammer) (19). They hit the huge mountain-like demons with equally huge rocks and boulders. In

this way, those furious monkeys tormented the demons in the battlefield (20). [19-20]

केचिद्रथगतान्वीरान्गजवाजिस्थितानपि ।
निर्जघ्नुः सहसाप्लुत्य यातुधानान्प्लवङ्गमाः ।।२१।।

Some of the brave demons were on chariots, others warriors were on the backs of war elephants and horses. The monkeys leapt, jumped and skipped obstacles repeatedly to hit them hard on their mounts themselves (21).

शैलाशृङ्गनिभास्ते तु मुष्टिनिष्क्रान्त लोचनाः ।
वेपुपेतुश्च नेदुश्च राक्षसपुङ्गवा ।।२२।।

The punch of the monkeys was like being struck by the pointed summits of a mountain[1], and with it they gauged out the eyes of the demon warriors[2]. Blinded, dazed and shocked with knocked-out eyes and the vicious strike launched at them by the monkeys, the excellent demon warriors[3] shrieked in pain and tumbled down from their mounts, such as the chariots, the elephants and the horses[4] (22).

[1]शैलाशृङ्गनिभास्ते तु मुष्टि, [2]निष्क्रान्त लोचनाः, [3]राक्षसपुङ्गवा, [4]वेपुपेतुश्च नेदुश्च

[Note :- Verse nos. 21 and 22 when read together will make the scene very clear. The monkeys, who were on foot, jumped up and hit the demons with their clenched fists in their eyes. The punch was like a huge boulder being thrust into the eye, blackening it. Thus blinded by the monkeys who often managed to gauge out their eyes, surely enough, the maddened demons did yell and shriek in horrible pain.]

ततः शूलैश्च वर्जश्च विमुष्टैर्हरिपुङ्गवैः ।
मुहूर्तेनावृता भूमिरभवच्छोणितप्लुता ।।२३।।

Then the excellent monkeys[1] used pointed weapons[2] (such as spears, spikes, lancets, daggers etc.), Vajra[3] (or battering rams, dumbbells, batons and war maces and other such arms which were heavy and strong like thunderbolt and killed those whom they hit) and clenched fists[4] to thrash and pound the enemy army, so much so that the earth in the battlefield became soaked with their blood[5] (23).

[1]र्हरिपुङ्गवैः, [2]शूलैश्च, [3]वर्जश्च, [4]विमुष्टै, [5]मुहूर्तेनावृता भूमिरभवच्छोणितप्लुता

विकीर्णैः पर्वताग्रैश्च रक्षोभिरुपमर्दितैः ।
आक्षिप्ता क्षिप्यमाणाश्च भग्नशेषाश्च वानराः ।।२४।।

Meanwhile, the demons repulsed the attack by pounding the monkeys relentlessly with mountains, huge boulders and rocks[1]; the demons angrily thrashed and pounded them mercilessly[2], causing them to disperse and get scattered in the battlefield[3]. Some of them (monkeys) were severely wounded and bruished[4]; some had their heads fractured and battered[5] (24).

[1]पर्वताग्रैश्च, [2]भिरुपमर्दितैः, [3]विकीर्णैः, [4]आक्षिप्ता क्षिप्यमाणाश्च, [5]भग्नशेषाश्च

रथेन रथिनं चापि राक्षसं राक्षसेन च ।
हयेन च हयं केचित्पिपिषुर्धरणी तले ।।२५।।

Chariots dashed and crashed against chariots (and broke down into splinters), demons crushed other demons underfoot, and horses trampled upon other horses and reduced them to pulp on the ground (25).

वानरान्वानरैरेव जघ्नुर्घोरा हि राक्षसाः ।
राक्षसात्रक्षसैरेव पिपिषुर्वानरा युधि ।।२६।।

The demon warriors crushed and squeezed one group of monkeys with another, while the monkeys did the same with their opponents, the demons, grinding one group with the other (26).

आक्षिप्य च शिला जघ्नू राक्षसा वानरस्तथा ।
तेषामाच्छिद्य शस्त्राणि जघ्नुस्तानपि वानराः ।।२७।।

The demons pounded, thrashed and crushed the monkeys with huge rocks and boulders, while the monkeys too shattered their opponent's armour relentlessly by hitting back at them (27).

निर्जघ्नुः शैलशिखैर्विभिन्नश्च परस्परम् ।
सिंहनादं विनेदुश्च रणे वानरराक्षसाः ।।२८।।

Attacking each other with a wide assortment and range of pointed rocks, boulders and mountains resembling large and huge summits of mountains[1], the monkeys and the demons roared at each other like lions and thundered, yelling and shrieking violently[2] in the battlefield (28).

[1]शैलशिखैर्विभिन्नश्च, [2]सिंहनादं विनेदुश्च

छिन्नचर्मतनुत्राणा राक्षसा वानरैः कृताः ।
सुस्राव रुधिरं तेभ्यः स्रवतः पर्वतादिव ।।२९।।

The vicious attack of the monkeys made the demons resemble a hollow quiver from which the protective outer layer of hide has been

sheared off[1]. As a result, their blood flowed down on the ground like waterfalls cascading down the slopes of huge mountains[2] (29).

[1]छिन्नचर्मतनुत्राणा, [2]स्त्रवत: पर्वतादिव

[Note :- The quiver is made of a metal which is covered on both the sides, inside and outside, with leather. When this leather coating is removed, the rough and raw metal is exposed. This analogy is used here to say that the skin from the bodies of the demon warriors was torn away and their raw bones were exposed. As a result, blood streamed down from these wounds on their bodies and flowed onto the battlefield.]

तस्मिंस्तदा संयति सम्प्रवृत्ते कोलाहले राक्षसराजधान्याम् ।
सहृष्यमाणेषु च वानरेषु निपात्यमानेषु च राक्षसेषु ।।३०।।

With such a no-holds-barred and horrendous battle raging, in which the monkeys had an upper hand and were cheerfully gaining ground over the demons while the latter were getting trounced and beaten back, there was a great turmoil in the city of the demons (30).

[Note :- When the news from the battle front reached the city that the demon army is losing ground and the warriors are biting dust and the battle was swinging in favour of Sri Ram's army consisting chiefly of the monkey, there was a serious alarm and a horrifying tumult rose in the city of Pushkar. There is no wonder in it, because everyone in the city knew what fate held out for its residents when the city would finally fall to the invading army of Sri Ram consisting chiefly of demons and monkeys —there would be a large scale slaughter, plunder and pillage once the monkeys managed to enter the city gates either after victory or by breaching the security parameter even during the war.]

प्रभज्य मानेषु महाबलेषु महर्षयो भूतगणाश्च नेदु: ।
तेनापि सर्वे हरय: प्रहृष्टा विनेदुराक्ष्वेडितसिंहनादै: ।।३१।।

When the great army of the demons was dispersed, shattered and battered as they were by the relentless attack of the monkeys[1], the great sages[2] as well as the ghosts and spirits of the battlefield[3] made a thunderous applause[4] to celebrate the occasion. This further encouraged the monkeys who became excited and exhilarated with ecstasy[5]. They flayed, shook and swayed their arms in joyous

abundance, exulting and celebrating the occasion[6], cheering and roaring thunderously like a lion[7] (31).

[1]प्रभज्य, [2]महर्षयो, [3]भूतगणाश्च, [4]नेदु:, [5]प्रहृष्टा, [6]राक्ष्वेडि, [7]विनेदसिंहनादै:

[Note :- The sages felt happy because Sri Ram was gaining ground while the ghosts and spirits felt exulted because they had a lot of dead bodies to feast upon, a lot of blood to drink and skeletons to play with. This was the environment that they liked.]

Thus ends Canto 20 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the battle between Sri Ram and Ravana.

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Canto 21
Ravana trounces and disperses Sri Ram's huge army

This Canto marks the second phase of war. Seeing that his demon army was being decimated and dispersed by Sri Ram's army, Ravana took the lead himself and plunged head on in the battle. Not wishing to shed unnecessary blood, he used a special weapon known as 'Vaaye-Vyaastra' or the 'wind-weapon' which created such a tremendous force of wind pressure that the entire army of Sri Ram was sucked out of the battlefield and thrown away to as far afield places as Ayodhya, Kishkindha and Lanka, from where the soldiers of Sri Ram's army had come, that they landed there in a dazed and stupefied condition. The scared men found themselves in Ayodhya; the stunned monkeys in Kishkindha; the terrified demons of Vibhishan in Lanka. Meanwhile, only Sri Ram and Sita, sitting in their Pushpak chariot-cum-plane remained in the battlefield at Pushkar to face the wrath of Ravana and his army. Sri Ram himself was greatly amazed at this marvelous spectacle and magical feat, and he became angry and prepared himself for a do or die battle to kill Ravana. Meanwhile, seeing that his stupendous powers have failed to have their subduing effect on Sri Ram and scaring him into submission,

Ravana became all the more furious, vehement and wrathful.

ततो रथं मारुततुल्यवेगमारुह्य शक्तिं निशितां प्रगृह्य ।
स रावणो रामबलं प्रहृष्ठो विवेश हि मीनो हि यथार्णवौधम् ।।१।।

Finding that his army has been demoralised and trounced, Ravana strode upon a chariot which was as swift and agile and maneuverable as the wind[1]. He took in hand a formidable 'Shakti' (an arrow or spear like weapon which had special powers and was very potent like electric; in modern parlance, a 'missile')[2] and dashed into the army of Sri Ram just like a fish (e.g., a huge whale and shark)[3] plunges into the water of the ocean[4]. [That is, he sliced through the rank and file of Sri Ram's army cutting through the huge throng of monkeys swiftly, and scattering them hither and thither, leaving them in total disarray.] (1)

[1]रथं मारुततुल्यवेग, [2]शक्तिं प्रगृह्य, [3]मीनो, [4]यथार्णवौधम्

सवानरान्हीनबलान्निरोक्ष्य प्राणेन दीप्तेन रराज राजा ।
एकक्षणेनेन्द्ररिपुर्महात्मा निहन्तुमैच्छन्नरवानरांश्च ।।२।।

When the king of demons, Ravana, saw the terrified monkeys, the thoughts of his ability of annihilating his enemies, the monkeys, in a fraction of moment appeared in his mind and heart. But at the same time, the greatness and virtues of his noble Atma stood up and intervened to make him think again. [That is, his subconscious mind had told him that this was not good.] (2)

मनसा चिन्तयामास सहस्र कन्धरः स्वराट् ।
एते क्षुद्राः समायाताः प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ।।३।।
द्वीपान्तरं महत्प्राप्य मम युद्धाभिकांक्षिणः ।
किं स्यान्म महतैः क्षुद्रैर्नरराक्षसवानरैः ।।४।।

That 1000-headed Ravana thought to himself, 'These lowly and stupid fellows have abandoned their property, wealth and homestead, and have staked their lives[1] to come for battle here [3]. They landed inside the island[2] and wish to gain fame by fighthing with me[3]. What will I gain by killing these lowly, humble and harmless humans, monkeys and demons[4]? (4). [3-4]

[1]प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च, [2]द्वीपान्तरं महत्प्राप्य, [3]मम युद्धाभिकांक्षिणः, [4]किं महतैः क्षुद्रैर्नरराक्षसवानरैः

यस्माद्देशात्समायातास्तं देशं प्रापयाम्यहम् ।
क्षुल्लकेषु शराघातं न प्रशंसन्ति पण्डिताः ।।५।।

I shall send them back to the country from where they have come. Wise ones do not honour, praise or laud someone[1] for attacking those who are humble and lowly[2], with arrows and other weapons[3]' (5).

[1]न प्रशंसन्ति पण्डिताः, [2]क्षुल्लकेषु, [3]शराघातं

इति सञ्चिन्त्य धनुषावायव्यास्त्रं युयोज ह ।
तेनास्त्रेण नरा ऋक्षा वानरा राक्षसा हि ते ।।६।।
यस्माद्यस्थात्समायातास्तं तं देशं प्रयापिताः ।
गलहस्तिकलया विप्र चोराभ्राजभटा इव ।।७।।

Thinking and deciding thus, Ravana mounted his bow with an arrow known as 'Vaaye-Vyaastra'[1]. When he used that magnificent and stupendously powerful weapon, all the humans, monkeys or demons of Sri Ram's army (6) were flung back to the places from where they had come even as thieves, who had stealthily entered the palace grounds on the sly, are forcefully rounded up by the guards of a king who catch hold of them by their throats[2] and eject them out of the palace when they are caught red-handed (7). [6-7]

[1]सञ्चिन्त्य धनुषावायव्यास्त्रं, [2]गलहस्तिकलया

[Note :- (i) The 'Vaaye-Vyaastra' (वायव्यास्त्रं) is a missile-like arrow which could create a very powerful blast of wind, such as the one formed during a strong tornado or a gale which could sweep off everything around with its stupendous force. It was like detonating a 'sonic bomb' or a 'vacuum bomb' which created such a tremendous and strong force of wind, caused by a powerful vacuum in the epicenter of the detonation, causing a powerful shock effect which caused everything to be flung around. The explosion created a wall of sonic waves which resembled a sudden punch of a powerful gust of gale-strong wind lashing at a ship in the ocean. It is a well established fact that strong tornadoes can lift even heavy vehicles off the ground and tear off the roofs of houses and throw them like nine pins to far away places. This weapon combined a number of powerful wind-related forces witnessed during different types of storms, such as a

tornado, a gale, a typhoon, a cyclone, a hurricane and a whirl wind appearing in rapid succession.

(ii) Verse nos. 2-7 show clearly that this elder brother of the Ravana of Lanka was not as ruthless and blood thirsty, not as wicked and war mongering as his younger sibling. Verse nos. 3-4 show that he did not wish to unnecessarily spill blood of soldiers who were only carrying out their duties and obeying the commands of their king, Sri Ram. Frankly speaking, what option did they have except to obey their Lord Sri Ram and fight with Ravana? Ravana's righteous and virtuous heart, his Atma, his consciousness, his wisdom and noble thoughts forbade him from killing those who were innocent and were merely doing their duties and had no personal grudge against him. So instead of slaughtering them without any cause, something which he could have done in an instant, he used the 'wind weapon' to throw them away from the battle front inspite of the fact that thousands of his own demons soldiers were gravely wounded or killed in the battle. This also shows that he was not vindictive by nature.]

ते सर्वे स्वगृहं प्राप्ता अस्त्रवेगेन विस्मिताः ।
क्व स्थिताः क्व समायातामन्यन्त स्वप्न एव तैः ।।८।।

All of them were sent back to their respective homes[1] by the force of that weapon[2]. When they found themselves suddenly and unexpectedly in their own homes, they were absolutely stunned, dazed and amazed, wondering in astonishment[3], 'Where were we and where have we suddenly come?' They thought that they were day dreaming[4] (8).

[1]ते सर्वे स्वगृहं प्राप्ता, [2]अस्त्रवेगेन, [3]विस्मिताः, [4]स्वप्न एव तैः

प्रलयानिलवेगेन अस्त्रेण वञ्चिता भृशम् ।
भरतो लक्ष्मणश्चापि शत्रुघ्नो हनुमांस्तथा ।।९।।

When that stupendous wind force resembling the powerful thrust of the wind blowing during the dooms day[1] struck with a powerful blow or punch, it also severely hurt and knocked down unconscious[2] Bharat, Laxman, Shatrughan and Hanuman in its aftermath (9).

[1]प्रलयानिलवेगेन, [2]वञ्चिता भृशम्

सुग्रीवनलनीलाद्या हरयोऽनिलरंहस ।

विभीषणपुरोगाश्च राक्षसाः क्रूरविक्रमाः ।।१०।।

Sugriv, Nal, Neel and other chief monkeys as well as Vibhishan and other fierce demons[1] who were valorous, valiant, powerful, potent, strong, courageous and brave[2] too were injured (and knocked out) by that powerful blast which inflicted serious injury upon them by its punch[3] (10).

[1]क्रूर, [2]विक्रमाः, [3]हरयोऽनिलरंहस

वानराश्च नरा ऋक्षा राक्षसा अक्षता गृहम् ।
प्राप्यातिविस्मिताः सर्वे शोचन्ते राममेवपि ।।११।।

Monkeys, humans, bears and demons —all were severely wounded. Suddenly finding themselves in their homes[1], they were completely taken aback, perplexed and bewildered as to what has happened[2]. They were worried and anxious about the welfare of Sri Ram[3] (11).

[1]ऽतिविस्मिताः, [2]अक्षता गृहम्, [3]शोचन्ते राममेवपि

पुष्करे पुष्पकेतिष्ठत्ससीतो राघवः परम् ।
आस्ते स्म नास्त्रवेगोऽयं रामं चालयितुं क्षमः ।।१२।।

Only Raghav (Sri Ram) along with Sita remained behind in Pushkar, seated on the Pushpak chariot-cum-plane. The formidable weapon shot by Ravana (the Vaaye-Vyaastra) failed to affect Sri Ram; it could not move him and Sita from their position in the battlefield (12).

[Note :- This verse clearly shows that only Sri Ram and Sita remained behind at the battle front after the sonic bomb was detonated by Ravana. All the rest of their strong and powerful army was thrown away by the crushing impact of the powerful blow. This weapon created such a stupendous wall of sound waves that anything that came in its way was simply swept or blown away. The question now arises as to why Sri Ram and Sita were not too blown away by its blast. The answer lies in the fact that the Pushpak was a special plane of Gods and it must have been firmly entrached on the ground and too heavy to be blown away by the blast. This explains why Sri Ram and Sita could not be blown away along with others.]

महर्षयोऽपि तत्रासन्किमेतदिति विस्मिताः ।
सापि सीता महाभागा तत्रास्ते स्म शुचिस्मिता ।।१३।।

Even the wise, erudite, all knowing and sagacious great sages were

also dumbfounded and perplexed[1], wondering in bewilderment, 'What is this; what has happened so suddenly?'[2]. Inspite of all these consternations, bewilderments, perplexities and confusions[3], the most glorious, fortunate, auspicious and great Sita[4] remained unruffled and unfazed[5] (as if nothing unexpected or surprising has happened and there was nothing to be frightened of). She remained calm and poised, and smiled pleasantly[6], amused by the stunning developments (13).

[1]महर्षयोऽपि विस्मिताः, [2]तत्रासन्किमेतदिति, [3]तत्रास्ते, [4]सीता महाभागा, [5]सापि, [6]स्म शुचिस्मिता

गन्धर्वनगराकारं दृष्ट्वा रामबलं महत् ।
स्वस्तीतिवादिनः सौम्यशान्ति जेपुर्महर्षयः ।।१४।।

Finding that the battlefield resembled the city of Gandharvas[1] and not seeing Sri Ram's army anywhere, the sages and seers (who were watching the proceedings along with the Gods from the sky) were very alarmed and felt extremely frightened. They started the incantation of divine Mantras (holy words) invoked to allay bad omens and counter the effects of evils spirits. They exclaimed happily, 'Let there be peace; let there be auspiciousness; let there be welfare and wellbeing all around!'[2] (14)

[1]गन्धर्वनगराकारं, [2]स्वस्तीतिवादिनः सौम्यशान्ति जेपुर्महर्षयः

[Note :- The allusion to the city of Gandharvas (गन्धर्वनगर) is generally used to indicate some scenario which is deceptive, outwordly, imaginary and illusionary in nature. When the sages and seers did not see the army of Sri Ram on the ground in the battlefield, they could not figure out what has happened so suddenly and unexpectedly to it, where has such a huge army vanished in a fraction of a moment. This left them completely bewildered and confused. So they chanted holy Mantras to invoke divine powers to intercede on their behalf and prevent any adverse and calamitous happening, and to calm down any possibility of a catastrophe from unfolding, especially because Sri Ram and Sita were alone in the battlefield.]

अन्तरीक्षचराः सर्वे हाहाकारं प्रचक्रिरे ।
देवा अग्निमुखा विप्र किं कृतं रावणेन हि ।।१५।।

The heavenly creatures (such as Gods and spirits of ancestors)[1] lamented and wailed in distress and dismay[2]. Gods such as the Fire-God[3] exclaimed in amazement, 'What has Ravana done?' (15).

[1]अन्तरीक्षचराः, [2]हाहाकारं, [3]देवा अग्निमुखा

गरुडस्थो यदा विष्णु रावणं हन्तुमागत ।
लीलया लवणाम्भोधौ क्षिप्तो विष्णुः सनातनः ।।१६।।

According to tradition, in some ancient time[1], when Vishnu had mounted the legendary Garud (his mount, the bird heron or eagle) and had come to slay Ravana, the latter had playfully, even without any effort or exertion on his part[2], flung Vishnu away[3] towards the salty ocean[4] (16).

[1]सनातनः, [2]लीलया, [3]क्षिप्तो विष्णुः, [4]लवणाम्भोधा

साट्टहासं विनद्योच्चैः राक्षसा वामपाणिना ।
ततः प्रभृति देवाश्च गन्धर्वाः किन्नरा नराः ।।१७।।
गन्धमस्य न गृहन्ति शार्दूलस्येव जम्बुकाः ।
सोऽयं विष्णुर्दशरथाज्जातो देवः सनातनः ।।१८।।

He (Ravana) had laughed aloud tauntingly and scornfully[1], managing to do this stupendous and unprecedented feat with his left hand (i.e., very easily, without much of an effort and most indignantly)[2]. From that day, the Gods, Gandharvas (demi-Gods who are heavenly musicians), Kinnars (demi-Gods who are heavenly dancers and singers), Apsars (heavenly courtesans) etc. loathe and shy away even from Ravana's smell[3] (i.e., they run away as soon as they get a hint that Ravana is around) just like jackals get terrified and despise the notion of being within a smelling distance of a lion[4]. That same eternal and ancient Lord (Vishnu)[5] has taken birth as the son of Dasrath (and this precedent was a cause of great anxiety and consternation amongst the Gods) (17-18).

[1]साट्टहासं, [2]विनद्योच्चैः वामपाणिना, [3]गन्धमस्य न गृहन्ति, [4]शार्दूलस्येव जम्बुकाः, [5]सोऽयं देवः सनातनः

[Note :- Verse nos. 16-18 give the reason for the worry of the sages and seers. They knew this Ravana had the potential of flinging away even Vishnu. He has demonstrated his abilities by throwing or flinging the entire army of Sri Ram by a single arrow. So they feared for the worst. How Ravana

failed to do so was a mystery for them. Perhaps this single event explains the gravity and importance of the presence of Sita in the battlefield, and especially the importance of this Ramayan called Adbhut Ramayan. Obviously, if all the factors were constant, it was only the presence of Sita sitting in the Pushpak plane that prevented it from being blown away. This shows that Sita was more powerful and had greater potentials than Sri Ram, and she would be instrumental in the slaying of the 1000-headed Ravana as will be evident in the unfolding drama which follows in the following Cantos.]

अस्माकं भागधेयेन रामो जयतु रावणम् ।
परस्परं सुराः सर्वे वदन्तोऽन्तर्हिता स्थिताः ।।१९।।

All the Gods stationed in the sky (heavens), who were watching the proceeding of the war most eagerly and anxiously, said among themselves, 'Let Sri Ram obtain victory over Ravana due to our own good luck! [That is, we stake all the good fortunes that we have accumulated, all the good and righteous deeds that we have done, and all the prayers, religious activities and blessings we can muster in order to empower and enable Sri Ram in defeating this great demon[1].] (19)

[1]अस्माकं भागधेयेन रामो जयतु

ननर्द च सहस्रास्याः क्षुद्रं मत्वा स राघवम् ।
विसिष्मिये च रामोऽपि तद्दृष्ट्वा कर्म दुष्करम् ।।२०।।

Treating Raghav (Sri Ram) as inconsequential, lowly and humble[1], the 1000-headed Ravana roared triumphantly, defiantly and scornfully[2]. Observing his most formidable and astounding feat (of flinging away the entire army in a split second)[3], Sri Ram was himself amazed, bewildered and mystified[4] (20).

[1]क्षुद्रं मत्वा स राघवम्, [2]ननर्द, [3]कर्म दुष्करम्, [4]विसिष्मिये

क्रोधमाहारयामास रावणस्य वधं प्रति ।
ततः किलकिलाशब्दं चक्रू राक्षसपुङ्गवाः ।।२१।।

Sri Ram became very furious with anger[1] and prepared to slay Ravana[2]. At this, the great demon chuckled derisively[3] (21).

[1]क्रोधमाहारयामास, [2]रावणस्य वधं प्रति, [3]किलकिलाशब्दं राक्षसपुङ्गवाः

स राघवः पद्मपलाशलोचनो जज्वाल कोपेन द्विषज्जयेषणः ।

रामं प्रहर्तुं न शशाकमेदिनी चकम्पिरे वारिधयो ग्रहा अपि ।।२२।।

Then when Sri Ram saw that Ravana was sneering, jeering and laughing sarcastically at him, taunting him scornfully as if it to show disdain, defiance and contempt for him, the lotus-eyed Raghav lit up in furious anger with vehemence[1]. He decided to finally kill the demon and obtain victory over him without delay[2]. Meanwhile, Ravana tried every trick he knew, used every weapon he had in his possession, but failed to attack and injure Sri Ram[3]. His failure to wound and subdue Sri Ram resulted in the earth, the ocean and planets to shake and tremble in fear[4] (22).

[1]जज्वाल कोपेन, [2]द्विषज्जयेषणः, [3]रामं प्रहर्तुं न शशाकमेदिनी, [4]चकम्पिरे वारिधयो ग्रहा अपि

[Note :- The reason why the earth shook and the ocean trembled in fear was that when Ravana had failed to hit Sri Ram inspite of his best efforts, he felt very disgusted and frustrated and he stamped his foot on the ground so hard in anger and dismay that the earth shook and this caused the water in the ocean to swirl, rise and dash against the various islands and mountains present in it. Huge waves rose high up in the air and crashed against each other and on the land. The scene resembled a vicious earthquake. The planets would naturally appear to move in the sky for an observer standing on the surface of the earth which was tossing and shaking violently under his legs. Another reason could have been that the earth and ocean were terrified of the prospect of Ravana venting his anger upon them in case he failed to subdue Sri Ram. The earth, the ocean and the planets feared for the worst to happen in the aftermath of the clash of these two Titans. See also canto 22, verse no. 6-8.]

Thus ends Canto 21 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing how Ravana managed to disperse Sri Ram's army in a fraction of a moment, leaving only Sri Ram and Sita in the battlefield.

——*—*

Canto 22
Sri Ram faints after the fierce duel with Ravana

Finding himself all alone in the battlefield, Sri Ram became furious with anger and he decimated the remaining demon army single handedly, putting all his war expertise into play. Ravana stepped forward and challenged him for a one to one duel which was fought most ferociously between them. At last, Sri Ram used the so-called invincible arrow created by Brahma, given by the latter to Indra who passed it on to sage Agastya who in turn had given it to Sri Ram to slay the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka. It was the most potent and powerful weapon of the time, just like we have nuclear missiles in today's time. Sri Ram used it as a last ditch attempt to kill the enemy, but such was the magnificence of Ravana's potential and strength that he grabbed it playfully with his left hand as if it was an ordinary dart, and not an invincible powerful arrow, and he snapped it into two. Utterly stunned and dismayed, Sri Ram felt crestfallen. In retribution, Ravana shot his own missile which pierced through the Lord's chest and vanished underground like a bolt of lightening. This did Sri Ram in, and he fell down unconscious. Ravana exulted, while the rest of the creation was full of consternation as if doomsday had finally arrived.

विनर्द्दतं रिपुं दृष्ट्वा रामः शत्रुनिबर्हणः ।
जज्वाल च स कोपेन रक्षसां सहजो रिपुः ।।१।।

When Sri Ram, who was renowned as a vanquisher of enemies[1] and a natural enemy of the demons (representing evil, wicked, sinful and pervert forces of creation)[2], saw his opponent thundering and roaring defiantly in the battlefield[3], he lit up furiously with wrath and anger[4] (1).

[1]रामः शत्रुनिबर्हणः, [2]रक्षसां सहजो रिपुः, [3]विनर्द्दतं रिपुं, [4]जज्वाल च स कोपेन

विचकर्ष धनुः श्रेष्ठ प्रलयानलसन्निभम् ।
वेगेन बाणांश्चिक्षेप रक्षसां मर्मसु प्रभुः ।।२।।

Pulling the string of his magnificent bow which appeared to spew the fierce fire appearing during the doomsday[1], the Lord rapidly

pounded and peppered[2] the sensitive and delicate parts of the body[3] of demons with his swift and potent arrows[4] shot in rapid-fire quick succession (2).

[1]धनुः श्रेष्ठ प्रलयानलसन्निभम्, [2]श्चिक्षेप, [3]मर्मसु, [4]वेगेन बाणां

तिलशः खण्डयन्ति स्म बाणा राक्षसपुङ्गवान् ।
कदा धनुषि सन्धते कदा विसृजति प्रभुः ।।३।।

He cut and sliced through the great demons of Ravana's army rapidly with his swift arrows, cutting them to bits and pieces. The shooting was so quick, rapid and swift that no one could make out when Sri Ram mounted an arrow on the bow[1] and when he shot it[2] (3).

[1]कदा धनुषि सन्धते, [2]कदा विसृजति

नान्तरं ददृशे कैश्चिच्छिन्नाः रयुररयः परम् ।
जघान राक्षसान्रामो रुद्रः पशुगणानिव ।।४।।

The enemy was getting quickly decimated and annihilated[1]. Sri Ram slayed the demons[2] just like Rudra (the furious form of Lord Shiva) sacrifices the animals (during the fire sacrifice)[3] (4).

[1]कैश्चिच्छिन्नाः रयुररयः, [2]जघान राक्षसान्रामो, [3]रुद्रः पशुगणानिव

तद्दृष्ट्वा दुष्करं कर्म कृतं रामेण रावणः ।
अनीकाग्रं समासाद्य युयुधे राधवेण हि ।।५।।

Seeing the stupendous and unprecedented deed of Sri Ram (of single handedly slaughtering the fierce and vicious demons as if shredding paper in a shredding machine), Ravana came out to the front line of the battlefield to personally take on and face Raghav (Sri Ram) (5).

रे रे राक्षससेनान्यः प्रेक्षका इव तिष्ठत ।
अहमेको हनिष्यामि नरमाकस्मिकं रिपुम् ।।६।।

He addressed his forces to rally behind him, 'Oh the demon soldiers of my army! Stand here and see! I will kill this uninvited human enemy, who has come suddenly and without any provocation whatsoever[1], single handedly all by myself[2]. Just wait and watch![3] (6).

[1]नरमाकस्मिकं रिपुम्, [2]अहमेको हनिष्यामि, [3]प्रेक्षका इव तिष्ठत

अद्य निर्मानवां पृथ्वीं निर्देवं त्रिदिवं तथा ।
करिष्याम्यहमेवैकः शोषयिष्यामि वारिधीन् ।।७।।

I shall free the earth of all humans today[1], I shall render the 3 worlds

(nether, terrestrial and celestial) free of all Gods[2], and I shall dry up the ocean[3] today single handedly, without any support or help of any kind (7).

[1]निर्मानवां पृथ्वीं, [2]निर्देवं त्रिदिवं, [3]शोषयिष्यामि वारिधीन्

पर्वतांश्चूर्णयिष्यामि पातयिष्यामि वै ग्रहान् ।
इत्युक्त्वा राक्षसश्रेष्ठो रामं योद्धुमथाह्वयत् ।।८।।

I shall crush the mountains and reduce them to dust[1] and I shall make the planets fall from the sky[2]'.

Seething with anger, that great demon challenged and invited Sri Ram for battle (duel)[3] (8).

[1]पर्वतांश्चूर्णयिष्यामि, [2]पातयिष्यामि वै ग्रहान्, [3]रामं योद्धुमथाह्वयत्

त्वामद्य खड्गेनाच्छिद्य तर्पयिष्यामि चानुगान् ।
नेयं लङ्कापुरी राम नाहञ्च दशकन्धरः ।।९।।

Ravana ferociously sneered at Sri Ram, saying scornfully 'I shall pierce you with my sword[1] and satisfy my soldiers[2]. Oh Ram! This is not Lanka[3], and I am not the 10-headed one whom you had managed to kill[4] (and which deed of yours has made you so proud and overconfident about your strength and invincibility. It appears that that success has gone into your head. That is why you have unnecessarily attacked me without any provocation whatsoever and have thereby invited your own calamitous end)! (9).

[1]खड्गेनाच्छिद्य, [2]तर्पयिष्यामि चानुगान्, [3]नेयं लङ्कापुरी, [4]नाहञ्च दशकन्धरः

[Note :- Ravana snubbed Sri Ram with this statement. In essence, he meant to say that Sri Ram felt very proud that he had managed to kill the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka, who was considered invincible in the world especially because of the boons that he had got from Brahma, the creator, in battle, and thought that fighting and killing his elder brother, the 1000-headed Ravana, would be a cake walk for him, as it were. Even killing of the 10-headed Lanka king was possible only after a harrowing experience in which Laxman had got wounded and almost died and could only be revived because of the help from Hanuman who had brought the life-saving herb, called Sanjivani, from the Himalayas. As for Ravana, Sri Ram had tried his best but failed to kill him on his own. It was the traitor Vibhishan who should actually get the credit for his killing because it was he who had divulged the secret of his long life and invincibility to Sri Ram. This secret was the presence of pitcher of ambrosia in his heart (and according to some versions, in his navel) and it was only then that Sri Ram could manage to kill the 10-headed king of Lanka. Sri Ram should not be proud of his deeds, and he should not be so haughty as to unnecessarily and without any provocation launch a campaign against a Ravana who had not offended him in any manner like his younger sibling, the 10-headed Ravana, who had abducted Sita from the forest. So, in the context of our present story, this thousand headed Ravana appears to tell Sri Ram that he would now 'teach him a lesson'!]

शिरस्ते पोथयिष्यामि गदया रघुनन्दन ।
कपित्थमिव काकुत्स्थ करी मदकलः किल ।।१०।।

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! I shall bash your head with my battle mace[1] and it will fall down like a fruit called 'Kainth' (the wood apple)[2] falls down from an elephant[3], bashed and shattered' (10).

[1]शिरस्ते पोथयिष्यामि गदया, [2]कपित्थमिव, [3]मदकलः किल

[Note :- The fruit of the wood apple tree is eaten whole by an elephant who puts it straight in his mouth, and after its contents are extracted inside the animal's intestine, the outer shell is excreted through the anus of the animal. Ravana alludes to this when he says that your head will fall down like the Kainth fruit from the elephant.]

इत्युक्त्वा रावणो युद्धं रामेण सह चारभत् ।
तद्भूद्भैरथं युद्धं बलिवासवयोरिव ।।११।।

Saying this, Ravana commenced fighting a fierce and unrelenting duel with Sri Ram. The battle between the two of them resembled the ferocious duel that once took place between Bali and Baasav[1]. Both of them (Sri Ram and Ravana) were on their respective war chariots[2] (11).

[1]बलिवासवयोरिव, [2]तद्भूद्भैरथं युद्धं

रावणं प्राप्य रामोऽपि परं हर्षमुपागमत् ।
तदभूदद्भुतं युद्धं द्वयोर्वै रोमहर्षणम् ।।१२।।

Finding Ravana in an aggressive and angry mood in front of him,

Sri Ram felt very happy (because he has now got an opportunity to settle a quick score with him without wasting time and energy in fighting the entire demon army). The two fought most valiantly and magnificently. The battle was most awe inspiring and amazing[1] as well as blood cuddling and thrilling[2] (12).

रामस्य च महाबाहोर्बलिनो रावणस्य च ।
गन्धर्वेण च गान्धर्व देवं दैवेन राघव: ।।१३।।

The battle between Sri Ram, who was most strong in arms and powerful[1], and Ravana, who was equally strong and valiant[2], raged on with the use of potent weapons of war known as 'Gandharva and Daiva'[3] (13).

[1]रामस्य च महाबाहा, [2]र्बलिनो रावणस्य, [3]गान्धर्व देवं

[Note :- The weapons were named after the Gandharvas and the Gods who generally used them.]

अस्त्रं राक्षसराजस्य जघान परमास्त्रवित् ।
अस्त्रयुद्धे च परमो रावणो रक्षसाधिप: ।।१४।।
ससर्ज परमक्रुद्ध: पन्नगास्त्रं स राघवे ।
ते रावणधनुर्मुक्ता: शरा: काञ्चनभूषिता: ।।१५।।
अभ्यवर्षन्त काकुत्स्थं सर्माभूत्वा महाविषा: ।
ते सर्पवदना घोरा वमन्तो ज्वलनं मुखै: ।।१६।।

Sri Ram, who was a great expert with weapons (and the art and skill of warfare)[1] immediately destroyed or neutralised[2] all the weapons, arms and armaments of the demon king Ravana. The latter was also most skilled and expert with the use of weapons in war[3] (14), so he furiously[4] used the formidable weapon known as 'Pannagastra'[5] upon Raghav. These were gold plated[6] specially empowered and energised arrows that converted themselves into very poisonous snakes[7] as soon as they left Ravana's bow[8] and they fell down upon Sri Ram in the form of serpents (and not arrows). These serpents were like dragons that spewed a fierce tongue of scorching fire from their mouths[9] (15-16). [14-16]

[1] परमास्त्रवित्, [2]अस्त्रं जघान, [3]अस्त्रयुद्धे च परमो, [4]परमक्रुद्ध:, [5]ससर्ज पन्नगास्त्रं, [6]काञ्चनभूषिता:, [7]सर्माभूत्वा महाविषा:, [8]रावणधनुर्मुक्ता: शरा:, [9]घोरा वमन्तो ज्वलनं मुखै:

राममेवाभ्यवर्त्तन्त व्यादितास्या भयावहा: ।
तैर्वासुकिसमस्पर्शैर्दीप्तभोगैर्महाविषै: ।।१७।।

Those most horrifying and abominable[1] dragons who resembled the python named Vasuki[2] in their majestic and magnificently radiant bodies and formidable poisonous breath[3], opened their mouths wide and lunged forward at Sri Ram[4] (17).

[1]भयावहा:, [2]तैर्वासुकिस, [3]स्पर्शैर्दीप्तभोगैर्महाविषै:, [4]राममेवाभ्यवर्त्तन्त व्यादितास्या

[Note :- 'Vasuki' was the legendary python that was used in the form of a rope by the demons and the Gods during the legendry churning of the ocean in search of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss.]

दिशश्च विदिशश्चैव समन्तादावृता भृशम् ।
राम: सम्पततो दृष्ट्वा पन्नगांस्तान्सहस्रश: ।।१८।।

Sri Ram observed that all the direction of the sky have been covered[1] by those thousands of vicious snakes[2] who were swiftly moving towards him (like a big shroud or a latticed sheet of snakes ready to land on him from the sky and pin him down to the ground) to attack him from all the sides at once[3] (18).

[1]समन्तादावृता भृशम्, [2]पन्नगांस्तान्सहस्रश:, [3]सम्पततो

सौपर्णमस्त्रं तद्धोरं पुन: प्रावर्तयद्रणे ।
रामेण च शरा मुक्ता रूक्मपुङ्खा: शिलाशिता: ।।१९।।
सुपर्णा: काञ्चना भूत्वा विचेरु: सर्पशत्रव: ।
ते ताञ्छत्रुशराञ्जघ्नु: सर्परूपान्महाविषान् ।।२०।।

He immediately invoked the most potent and formidable antidote to such a weapon, called 'Garudastra' (or the weapon which immediately transformed itself into the eagle or heron called Garud) which devoured all the snakes created by the Pannagastra shot by Ravana in the battlefield.

The arrows of Sri Ram had golden tailfins[2]; they were sharpened by rubbing them against a rock face (to make them razor sharp)[3] (19). Those arrows metamorphosed into golden Garuds (eagle or heron)[4] who are deemed to be natural enemies of serpents[5]. These birds of prey flew everywhere in all the directions[6] and pounced upon those dragons from all the sides. They started to neutralise and destroy those most ferocious arrows of the enemy[7] which had converted themselves into poisonous snakes[8] (20). [19-20]

[1]सौपर्णमस्त्रं, [2]शरा मुक्ता रूक्मपुङ्खा:, [3]शिलाशिता:, [4]सुपर्णा: काञ्चना, [5]सर्पशत्रव:, [6]विचेरु:,

[7]ताञ्छत्रुशराञ्जघ्नुः, [8]सर्परूपान्महाविषान्

[Note :- Obviously, technology used today by modern armies to counter incoming missiles, in the form of 'anti-missile defense shield', was also known at that time. The arrows shot by Ravana which converted themselves into snakes were equivalent to the incoming missile, while the arrows shot by Sri Ram which converted into the Garud were like the anti-missiles launched to counter those incoming missiles launched by the enemy.]

सुपर्णरूपा रामस्य विशिखाः कामरुपिणः ।
अस्त्रे प्रतिहते क्रुद्धो रावणो राक्षसाधिपः ।।२१।।

Observing that Sri Ram's potent and formidable arrows[1], which were golden and magical[2], were swiftly countering and decimating his own arrows[3], the evil king of demons, Ravana[4], became furious with anger[5] (21).

[1]रामस्य विशिखाः, [2]कामरुपिणः, [3]अस्त्रे प्रतिहते, [4]रावणो राक्षसाधिपः, [5]क्रुद्धो

अभ्यवर्षत्तदा रामं घोराभिश्चाश्मवृष्टिभिः ।
ततः शरसहस्रेण पुनरक्लिष्टकारिणम् ।।२२।।

Then he (Ravana) showered a heavy torrent of stones, rocks and boulders[1] upon Sri Ram (in order to crush him under them). After that, he peppered the Lord with thousands of formidable arrows once again[2] (22).

[1]घोराभिश्चाश्मवृष्टिभिः, [2]शरसहस्रेण पुनरक्लिष्टकारिणम्

रामबाणानभ्यहनद्घोराभिः शरवृष्टिभिः ।
विषेदुर्देवगन्धर्वाश्चारणाः पितरस्तथा ।।२३।।

The arrows shot by him (Ravana), which rained down upon Sri Ram from all the sides[1], swiftly started to neutralise and destroy his (Sri Ram's) arrows[2]. The Gods, Gandharvas, Charans and Pittars were anguished and dismayed at this development[3] (23).

[1]शरवृष्टिभिः, [2]रामबाणानभ्यहनद्घोराभिः, [3]विषेदु

[Note :- The Gandharvas and Charans are demi-Gods who are celestial musicians and bards/minstrels respectively, while the Pittars are spirits of dead ancestors.]

राममार्तं तदा दृष्ट्वा सिद्धाश्च परमर्षयः ।
राचन्द्रमसं दृष्ट्वा ग्रस्तं रावण राहुणा ।।२४।।

Observing that Sri Ram was agitated, desperate and distressed[1], the various Siddhas (mystics) and great sages and seers felt as if the moon representing Sri Ram[2] was being devoured (or eclipsed) by Rahu[3] representing Ravana[4] (24).

[1]राममार्तं, [2]राचन्द्रमसं, [3]ग्रस्तं राहुणा, [4]रावण

[Note :- According to legend, a demon disguised himself as a God and sat down in their row when Vishnu was distributing the ambrosia of eternity, obtained by churning of the ocean, to the Gods. That demon managed to have a sip before his deceit was caught. Then Vishnu cut off his throat with his discus, the severed head becoming Rahu and the torso becoming Ketu. He was betrayed by the sun and the moon Gods who were sitting on his either sides; so he got a boon that he would gobble up both of them at regular intervals to quench his hunger. But since his neck was cut off, these two, the sun and the moon, after having entered his gaping mouth, emerged from the lower end of his severed head. According to mythology, this causes the two lunar and solar eclipses. Meanwhile, the torso which became Ketu metamorphosed into the cosmic comet with a long tail. Since they are the tormentors of Gods, the appearances of Rahu and Ketu are considered inauspicious occurrence.]

प्राजापत्यं च नक्षत्रं रोहिणीं शशिनः प्रियाम् ।
समाक्रम्य बुधस्तस्थौ प्रजाना माहते रतः ।।२५।।

At that horrifying moment, the planet mercury[1], which is the patron planet or star for Prajapati[2] (i.e., Brahma, the creator; literally meaning the master or the Lord who sustains his subjects), attacked Rohini who is the dear wife of the Moon-God[3]. This particular configuration of stars portends evil for the subjects of Prajapati (i.e., it precipitates calamitous events)[4] (25).

[1]बुध, [2]प्राजापत्यं च नक्षत्रं, [3]रोहिणीं शशिनः प्रियाम् समाक्रम्य, [4]प्रजाना माहते रतः

[Note :- When the Moon-God was devoured by Rahu, the planet Mercury got an opportunity and it lustfully pounced upon his consort Rohini! Such promiscuous behaviour amongst Gods is very ominous for the mortals and it is a harbinger of moral turpitude. With morality lost, nothing called

civilisation, nobility, virtuousness and righteousness would survive. This is why Prajapati has been especially mentioned here, just to emphasise the point that with all his remarkable feats in creating this vast universe and laying down all the codes of conduct for its regulation, including the Vedas which inculcate wisdom and enlightenment as well as spiritual knowledge in all the creatures, he had failed to leash in the lurking Frankenstein monster that he had himself created in the form of passions, lust, lasciviousness and promiscuity; Prajapati could not even control his own star Mercury from being sexually pervert and pouncing upon the wife of one of his own compatriots, the Moon-God, when he is in utter distress, being devoured by Rahu. Ordinarily it would have been expected of Mercury, who was the patron star of Prajapati, to give protection to Rohini instead of eyeing her with lust. We must know that the author of this epic, sage Valmiki, was no ordinary writer. With this single verse, he has expressed his anguish at the fall of standard of morality and ethics in the society, no matter what attempt is made to regulate it, leash it and enlighten the population about its ill effects. Valmiki did not wish to gloss over this aspect.]

सधूमः वरिवृत्तोर्मिः प्रज्वलन्निव सागरः ।
उत्पपात ततः क्रुद्धः स्पृशन्निव दिवाकरम् ॥२६॥

The ocean boiled[1] and steam came out from it[2]. Then Ravana leapt up angrily[3] as if attempting to touch the sun[4] (26).

[1]प्रज्वलन्निव सागरः, [2]सधूमः, [3]उत्पपात क्रुद्धः [4]स्पृशन्निव दिवाकरम्

नष्टरूपश्च पुरूषो मन्दरश्मिर्दिवाकरः ।
अदृश्यत कबन्धांकः समेतो धूमकेतुना ॥२७॥

The sun lost its glory, majesty, splendour and radiance like a spent force or burnt out fire[1]. Its rays became dull and lost their dazzle and shine and brightness[2]. 'Kabandhs' (the severed heads; meteors)[3] and 'Dhumketus' (comets)[4] appeared in the sky (as bad omens and a sign of some calamitous event) (27).

[1]नष्टरूपश्च पुरूषो, [2]मन्दरश्मिर्दिवाकरः, [3]कबन्धांकः, [4]धूमकेतुना

रूक्षाश्चखरनिर्घोषा गगने पुरूषाधमाः ।
औत्पातिकानि नर्दन्तः समन्तात्परिचक्रमुः ॥२८॥

The stars and planets in the sky felt the effect of the turmoil on the earth; the cacophonous tumult echoed from them, and there apparently seemed to be a violent noise emanating from the sky itself (as if the planets and the stars were having a severe earthquake and were about to break up)[1]. Violent disturbances, horrifying and chilling shrieks and terrifying turbulence[2] was discernible in every direction of the compass[3] (28).

[1]रूक्षाश्चखरनिर्घोषा गगने पुरूषाधमाः, [2]औत्पातिकानि नर्दन्तः, [3]समन्तात्परिचक्रमुः

रामोऽपि बद्ध्वा भ्रुकुटिं क्रोधसंरक्तलोचनः ।
क्रोधं चकार सुभृशं निर्दहन्निव राक्षसम् ॥२९॥

Sri Ram's eyebrows cocked up[1] and his eyes glowed red in ire, vehemence and anger[2]. It appeared that he would burn the demons to cinders[3] with his shrill anger and ferocious wrath[4] (29).

[1]बद्ध्वा भ्रुकुटिं, [2]क्रोधसंरक्तलोचनः, [3]सुभृशं निर्दहन्निव, [4]क्रोधं चकार

तस्य क्रुद्धस्य वदनं दृष्ट्वा रामस्य धीमतः ।
सर्वभूतानि वित्रेषुः प्राकम्पत मही तदा ॥३०॥

Seeing the ferocious countenance of Sri Ram's face[1] who was, however, wise, erudite, sagacious, adroit and enlightened[2], all the elements in creation became very distressed and terrified[3], and the earth shook and shivered[4] (30).

[1]क्रुद्धस्य वदनं, [2]धीमतः, [3]सर्वभूतानि वित्रेषुः, [4]प्राकम्पत मही

[Note :- The elements were afraid and terrified and the earth shook because Sri Ram, who was a personification of the Supreme Being, was not expected to loose his temper at anyone. Seeing him distressed and furious with anger, which was a very unexpected event, the creatures of the world became very annoyed and frightened because they felt that something very dangerous and fearful was about to happen, an event which would be disastrous for the entire creation.]

सिंहशार्दूलमाञ्छैलः प्रजज्वालाकुलद्रुमः ।
बभूव चातिक्षुभितः समुद्र इव पर्वसु ॥३१॥

All the trees and forests[1] as well as the lions and the tigers residing on mountains[2] were scorched as the mountains caught fire[3]. The scenario on the mountains resembled the one present inside the agitated ocean[4] that is been churned violently and boils over during

the dooms day (31).

[1]कुलद्रुमः, [2]सिंहशार्दूलमाञ्छैलः, [3]प्रजज्वाला, [4]क्षुभितः समुद्र इव पर्वसु

लङ्कायां रावणवधे यं प्रायुक्तं शरं प्रभुः ।
जग्राह तं शरं दीप्तं निःसन्तमिवोरगम् ।।३२।।

The arrow that the Lord Sri Ram had used[1] to slay the 10-headed Ravana in Lanka[2], he took up the same gloriously radiant and most potent arrow[3] resembling a viciously hissing dragon[4] (in his hand and mounted it on his bow) (32).

[1]प्रायुक्तं शरं, [2]लङ्कायां रावणवधे, [3]शरं दीप्तं, [4]निःसन्तमिवोरगम्

यमस्मै प्रथमं प्रादादगस्त्यो भगवानृषिः ।
ब्रह्मदत्तं महाबाणं यमाह युधि तद्वधे ।।३३।।

That arrow was given to the Lord by sage Agastya[1] on one earlier occasion. He (Sri Ram) picked up that great and potent arrow[2] given to him by that Brahmin (sage Agastya)[3] for use in this battle[4] (33).

[1]प्रादादगस्त्यो भगवानृषिः, [2]महाबाणं, [3]ब्रह्मदत्तं, [4]युधि तद्वधे

ब्रह्मणा निर्मितं पूर्णमिन्द्राद्यामिततेजसा ।
दत्तं सुरपतेः पूर्वं त्रैलोक्यजयकांक्षिणः ।।३४।।

The arrow was made or created by Brahma, the creator, himself[1], and Indra and other Gods had blessed it or empowered it with special energy, strength and potentials[2]. Previously, it was given to Indra (by Brahma) so that he could conquer the 3 worlds (celestial, terrestrial, subterranean or nether worlds) in order to become king of the universe[3] (34).

[1]ब्रह्मणा निर्मितं, [2]इन्द्राद्यामिततेजसा, [3]त्रैलोक्यजयकांक्षिणः

यस्य वाजेषु पवनः गले पावकभास्करौ ।
शरीरमाकाशमयं गौरवे मेरुमन्दरौ ।।३५।।
पर्वस्वपि च विन्यस्ता लोकपाला महौजसः ।
धनदो वरुणश्चैव पाशहस्तस्थान्तकः ।।३६।।

That most astounding and invincible arrow was stupendous in its powers, potentials and prowess. It had the swift Wind-God mounted on its tail-end[1], the fierce Fire-God and scorching Sun-God on its tip[2]. Its shaft was so vast and seemingly endless as the sky[3], and its majesty was like that of the legendary mountains Meru and Mandrachal (which are the two loftiest mountains in mythology)[4] (35).

All the soldered joints on it had one or the other Gods mounted (present) on them[5] —such as the famous Lokpals (the guardians of the various corners of the world)[6], the Lord of wealth (Kuber)[7], Varun (the Water-God)[8] and Yam (the God of death) with his thick baton[9] (36). [35-36]

[1]वाजेषु पवनः, [2]गले पावकभास्करौ, [3]शरीरमाकाशमयं, [4]गौरवे मेरुमन्दरौ, [5]पर्वस्वपि च विन्यस्ता, [6]लोकपाला महौजसः, [7]धनदो, [8]वरुण, [9]पाशहस्त

जाज्वल्यमानं वपुषा सपुंखं हेमभूषितम् ।
तेजसा सर्वभूतानां कृतं भास्करवर्चसा ।।३७।।

That arrow was shining and gleaming very brightly[1], its tailfins were golden in colour[2], its radiance and splendour were comparable to the sun[3], and it was superior to all that was present in the mortal creation (in the form of a weapon)[4] (37).

[1]जाज्वल्यमानं वपुषा, [2]सपुंखं हेमभूषितम्, [3]तेजसा भास्कर, [4]सर्वभूतानां वर्चसा

सधूममिव कालाग्नि दीप्यमानं रविं यथा ।
रथनागाश्ववृन्दानां भेदनं क्षिप्रकारिणम् ।।३८।।

It resembled the doomsday fire giving out a thick plume of smoke[1] and the sun in its brightness and shine[2]. It could swiftly pierce (drill) through war chariots[3] and as swiftly slay war horses[4] (38).

[1]सधूममिव कालाग्नि, [2]दीप्यमानं रविं, [3]रथनागा, [4]श्ववृन्दानां भेदनं क्षिप्र

परिघाणां सहस्राणां गिरीणां चैव भेदनम् ।
नानारुधिरसिक्ताङ्गं मेदोदिग्धं सुदारुणम् ।।३९।।

It had the stupendous, magnificent and fascinating powers to drill through or pierce through[1] thousands of layer of armour[2] as well as through huge mountains[3]. It was soaked with blood of different categories[4] and was thickly coated with flesh[5]. It was most terrible, most horrible, most horrifying, most formidable, most potent, most powerful and most fierce arrow that was ever created[6] (39).

[1]भेदनम्, [2]परिघाणां सहस्राणां, [3]गिरीणां, [4]नानारुधिरसिक्ताङ्गं, [5]मेदोदिग्धं, [6]सुदारुणम्

[Note :- ‘Different type of blood’ in the text indicates that it had been used to kill different types of sinful and evil creatures, or that it had the potentials to slay creatures of different types of blood and blood groups, i.e., animals, humans, demons, reptiles, birds etc., including those creatures who are cold blooded and those who are warm blooded. The same meaning

applies to it being symbolically covered with flesh.]

कालाभं सुमहानादं नानाशक्तिविनाशनम् ।
शत्रूणां त्रासजननं सुपर्णमिव पन्नगम् ।।४०।।

It resembled 'death' personified[1]. Its explosive and violent sound[2] could render other powers ineffective[3]. It tormented and terrified the enemies out of their wits[4], and it was like a fierce fire-spewing dragon with a long tail with a sharp tailfin[5] (40).

[1]कालाभं, [2]सुमहानादं, [3]नानाशक्तिविनाशनम्, [4]शत्रूणां त्रासजननं, [5]सुपर्णमिव पन्नगम्

[Note :- This particular verse reminds one of a supersonic cruise missile. Indeed, the very thought of a cruise missile going past will wrench the guts out of even a hardened of war veteran. It is easy to imagine what that arrow must have been like and how it must have sounded as it cruised towards its target from the point of view of a modern man who has witnessed the modern-day warfare using high technology weapons. Missiles have been used to drill through rock-solid mountains and pierce through solid concrete bunkers to explode inside, shattering to smithereens huge slabs of stones and concrete as if they were nine pins or paper cards shredded to pieces. See also verse no. 44 below.]

काकगृध्रवकानां च गोमायुवृकरक्षसाम् ।
नित्यं भक्ष्यप्रदं युद्धे राक्षसानां भयावहम् ।।४१।।

Having the potentials to regularly devour (i.e., overcome and kill)[1] such birds and animals of prey such as crows[2], vultures[3], herons[4] and jackals[5] as well as the soldier-class called Vrik (or Kshatriyas who do not shy away from killing and spilling blood during war)[6] and the demons who are flesh eaters and most cruel[7], that arrow unleashed terror amongst the rank and file of the demon army in the battlefield[8] (41).

[1]नित्यं भक्ष्यप्रदं, [2]काक, [3]गृध्र, [4]वकानां, [5]गोमायु, [6]वृक, [7]रक्षसाम्, [8]युद्धे राक्षसानां भयावहम्

द्विषतां कीर्तिहरणं प्रकर्षकरमात्मनः ।
अभिमन्त्र्य ततो रामस्तं महेषुं महाभुजः ।।४२।।

It could decimate and annihilate (literally 'steal') the fame and glory pertaining to the powers, prowess, potent, strength, valour and majesty of an enemy (opponent)[1]. Sri Ram, who was strong and

powerful in arms[2], invoked Lord Shiva[3] and activated that arrow[4] for obtaining an upper hand for himself in the raging battle[5] (42).

[1]द्विषतां कीर्तिहरणं, [2]रामस्तं महाभुजः, [3]महेषुं, [4]अभिमन्त्र्य, [5]प्रकर्षकरमात्मनः

वेदप्रोक्तेन विधिना कुण्डलीकृत्य कार्मुकम् ।
स रावणाय तं वेगाच्चिक्षेप शरमुत्तमम् ।।४३।।

He mounted that excellent arrow on his bow in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Vedas for this purpose[1], and then shot it at Ravana (43).

[1]वेदप्रोक्तेन विधिना

[Note :- The 'Veda' refereed here is not one of the well known Vedas called Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva. It is a sub-Veda known as 'Dhanur Veda' which is a Up-Veda. It deals with the science and skill of using the bow and the arrow as well as the science of warfare known as military science in modern terms; its main text is the Agni Puran. There are 4 'Up-Vedas', the other three are the following— (i) Ayurveda —which deals with herbals medicines and diseases (known as medical science in modern parlance), (ii) Artha Shastra —which deals with economics and political science, and (iii) Gandharva Veda —which deals with literature, poetry, theatre, magic, music, dance etc..]

स सायको धनुर्मुक्तो हन्तुं रामेण रावणम् ।
धूमपूर्व प्रजज्वाल प्राप्य वायुपथं महान् ।।४४।।

That formidable arrow shot by Sri Ram from his bow[1] with the express purpose of killing Ravana[2], first emitted fumes[3] (like a missile or rocket giving out exhaust gases from its hind part) and then lit up, spewing flames —much like the pillar of orange and yellow plume of flame that accompanies a rocket during its launch[4]. It then became airborne[5] and moved menacingly towards its target (Ravana) (44).

[1]सायको धनुर्मुक्तो महान्, [2]हन्तुं रावणम्, [3]धूमपूर्व, [4]प्रजज्वाल, [5]प्राप्य वायुपथं

[Note :- See note of verse no. 40 in this context.]

तं वज्रमिव दुर्धर्ष वज्रपाणिविसर्जितम् ।
कृतान्मकमिवावार्य रावणो वीक्ष्य तत्पुरः ।।४५।।
हुंकृत्य किल जग्राह बाणं वामेन पाणिना ।
ततस्तं जानुनाकृष्य बभञ्ज राक्षासाधिपः ।।४६।।

When Ravana saw that arrow resembling[1] the formidable[2] Vajra[3], the thunderbolt thrown by Indra[4], and his impending death which cannot be prevented[5], coming at him menacingly (45), he let out a shrill cry and roared loudly[6]. Catching the arrow disdainfully and contemptuously with his left hand[7], the great and evil king of demons[8] broke that arrow into two by bending it against his thighs[9] (46). [45-46]

[1]तं मिव, [2]दुर्धर्ष, [3]वज्र, [4]वज्रपाणिविसर्जितम्, [5]कृतान्मकमिवावार्य, [6]हुंकृत्य, [7]जग्राह बाणं वामेन पाणिना, [8]राक्षासाधिपः, [9]ततस्तं जानुनाकृष्य बभञ्ज

[Note :- This verse should remind us of what Sita had told the sages in Canto 17, verse no. 19½ and Canto 18, verse no. 5-6 that Sri Ram's victory over the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka was not worthy of so much glorification; the real glory would be when the Lord defeats the thousands headed elder brother of that Ravana. This is also what this Ravana meant when he taunted and snubbed Sri Ram in verse no. 9 of this Canto.

It must be noted that sage Valmiki had devoted 13 verses of this Canto (verse nos. 32-44) to describe the uniqueness and the stupendous powers and potentials of this particular arrow which Ram had used to shoot and kill the 10-headed Ravana and had again used it to kill this 1000-headed Ravana because he thought that it was the ultimate weapon which can be used for this purpose and which will be unfailing in its objective. Then the sage culminates it with only one single verse (verse no. 46) to say how Ravana caught hold of it and broke it by hitting it against his thighs. The contempt with which Ravana had caught hold of this arrow is emphasised by the fact that he had used his left hand, instead of the right hand to do so. The sage wished to emphasis the point that such a magnificent weapon —and that too shot after properly invoking the Mantras of the Vedas (verse no. 42-43) —was nothing more than a straw for Ravana as he could easily break it up. This subtle allusion to the expertise at weapons as well as the power and strength of Ravana to be of a far superior category to that of Sri Ram is very

evident here, and is further bolstered in the next few verses of this Canto when Sri Ram could not stand up to even one single arrow shot by Ravana in retaliation, and he falls down unconscious.

The next Canto no. 23 would describe the killing of this Ravana by Sita who would transform herself as the great Goddess of death known as Mahakali. It lays stress on the fact that the general perception of Sita being meek and humble throughout the story of the Ramayan as narrated by the major versions of the story, including that of Valmiki's other epic 'Ramayan' itself, is not the whole and complete truthful picture. In a society dominated by males, the strength of the female was undermined. It was to set the records straight that Valmiki decided to pen this sequel to his main epic, the Ramayan, and that is why he has laid so much emphasis in showing Sri Ram's vulnerability vis-à-vis the invincibility, potentials, strength, powers and prowess of Sita.]

भग्ने तस्मिञ्छरे रामो विमना इव तस्थिवान् ।
सहस्रकन्धरः क्रुद्धः क्षुरम्प्रगृह्य सायकम् ।।४७।।
वव्याध राघवं वक्षः सर्वप्राणेन राक्षसः ।४७½।

When that arrow was broken by Ravana like it was straw, Sri Ram felt very dismayed, hopeless, hapless, crestfallen and discouraged[1]. The thousand necked (headed) Ravana became delirious and extremely furious. He took a very sharp and potent arrow[2] (47) and the demon then shot it with all the might he had[3]. That arrow slammed into the chest of Raghav (Sri Ram) and pierced through it[4] (47½). [47-47½]

[1]रामो विमना, [2]क्षुरम्प्रगृह्य सायकम्, [3]सर्वप्राणेन राक्षसः, [4]वव्याध राघवं वक्षः

वक्षो निर्भिद्य से शरो रामस्य सुमहात्मनः ।।४८।।
भित्त्वा महीं च सहसा पाताल तलमाविशत् ।
ततो रामो महाबाहुः पपात पुष्पकोपरि ।।४९।।

That arrow pierced through the chest[1] of the great and righteous Sri Ram[2] (48), drilled through the earth (after escaping from his body)[3] and quickly went to the nether world called Patal[4]. At this, Sri Ram, who was most strong in arms[5], fell down unconscious[6] on the Pushpak chariot-cum-plane[7] (49). [48-49]

[1]वक्षो निर्भिद्य से शरो, [2]रामस्य सुमहात्मन:, [3]भित्त्वा महीं, [4]सहसा पाताल तलमाविशत्, [5]रामो महाबाहु:, [6]पपात, [7]पुष्पकोपरि

नि:संज्ञी निश्चलश्चासीद्धाहा भूतानि चक्रिरे ।
प्राकम्पत मही सर्वा सपर्वतवनाब्धिका ।
ऋषय: कान्दिशीकास्ते हा राम इति वादिन: ।।५०।।

He (Sri Ram) became unconscious[1] and laid absolutely still[2]. At this sight, all the creatures raised a tumultuous cry of alarm and utter dismay and distress. There was widespread lamentation and consternation everywhere[3]. The earth shook along with its mountains and forests[4]. All the sages and seers grieved and lamented, exclaiming woefully, 'Ah Ram!'[5] (50).

[1]नि:संज्ञी, [2]निश्चलश्चासी, [3]द्धाहा भूतानि चक्रिरे, [4]प्राकम्पत मही सर्वा सपर्वतवनाब्धिका, [5]ऋषय: हा राम इति वादिन:

दशशतवदनो जितारिरुग्रोरणशिरसि प्रननर्त सानुयात्र: ।
गगनतलगता निपेतुरुल्का: प्रलयमिवापि च मेनिरे जनौघा ।।५१।।

The thousand headed one (Ravana) who was renowned as a vanquisher of his enemies in any war, began dancing ecstatically in the battlefield[1]. Meteors began falling from the sky[2] and all the creatures thought that it would now be the end of the world[3] (51).

[1]प्रननर्त, [2]गगनतलगता निपेतुरुल्का:, [3]प्रलयमिवापि

Thus ends Canto 22 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing the hand to hand duel between Sri Ram and Ravana which ultimately led to Sri Ram getting wounded and falling down unconscious during the battle.

——*—*

Canto 23

Sita enters war and assuming the ferocious form of Mahakali, the great Goddess of death, she finally kills Ravana

Seeing that Sri Ram was mortally wounded and lying unconscious on the chariot, Sita revealed her true form as the cosmic power call 'Shakti' in front of which nothing can stand. She assumed an awe inspiring, chillingly ferocious and extremely terrifying form of 'Mahakali', literally the great Goddess of death, destruction and annihilation, and replicated a doomsday scenario in the battlefield. The entire demon army along with their thousand headed king Ravana were killed in a short time. Meanwhile, thousands of horrifying she-spirits of war appeared from each hair on Mahakali's body, and these terrifyingly ghostly spirits played ball using the severed heads of the demons lying scattered everywhere in the bloody slush of the battlefield. Her vehement wrath, anger and retribution broke all boundaries, and the entire world was on the verge of being annihilated. The sages, seers and Gods were extremely alarmed and they prayed to her to calm down.

This Canto stands out in the sense that it presents a very vivid picture of the chilling events of the battlefield and how the ferocious and bloodthirsty form of the Goddess danced the dance of doomsday with no holds barred. It also lists the name of all the she-spirits and female ogres, phantoms and ghosts that appeared there, their bone chilling cries and most terrifying countenance, their playing with the severed heads of the demon warriors, and the different birds and animals of prey having a field day, feeding upon and running away with dead bodies. Sita, in brief, accomplished in a fraction of a moment what Sri Ram and his entire army could not during the entire war which preceded Sri Ram's fainting. Valmiki, it appears, has made up for one regret that had been constantly gnawing at his heart when he wrote his other well known epic, the Ramayan, and that regret was that in that story, Sita was depicted to be always as the receiving end of sorrows and miseries, appearing to be weak humble and meek, cowering and weeping and at the

mercy of others. In this Canto, Valmiki has wiped out that one single regret or burden that he had upon his heart, and it was to show that Sita was not meek and weak but extremely powerful, potent, valiant, effective and strong as she should have been, being the manifestation of the cosmic divine power called Shakti, that she indeed was. The humbleness and simplicity that were the hallmarks of Sita was because she did not wish to subject her husband to appear to be junior to her in any respect; that would be most impolite and untraditional and unbecoming on her part. But inside her heart, she wished the world to know the facts—so that is why she smirked at and snubbed the sages when they were honouring Sri Ram upon his return after slaying the 10-headed Ravana of Lanka, and also when Sri Ram fell down unconscious on the chariot after being hit by the thousand headed Ravana's arrow. She appears to be subtly saying, 'Well, so much for all the glories heaped upon the Lord by the sages and the Gods! He could not bear even one single arrow directed at him by Ravana. Wait, oh sages and Gods, I'll show you who I am!' And then of course, all hell broke loose, at it were.

रामं तथाविधं दृष्ट्वा मुनयो भयविह्वलाः ।
हाहाकारं प्रकुर्वतः शान्ति जेपुश्च केचन ।।१।।

Seeing this pathetic decapitated condition of Sri Ram (lying wounded and unconscious on the chariot in the battlefield), the sages and seers became very nervous, anxious and terrified out of fear[1]. They lamented and grieved[2]; some of them invoked divine intervention to calm down (alleviate) the evil happenings with incantation of Mantras to restore peace everywhere[3] (1).

[1]मुनयो भयविह्वलाः, [2]हाहाकारं, [3]शान्ति जेपुश्च

तदा तु मुनिर्भिर्दृष्ट्वा सीता प्रहसितानना ।
वसिष्ठप्रमुखाः सर्वे सीतां प्रोचुर्महर्षयः ।।२।।

Observing the scornful sneer and smirk on the face of Sita[1] (indicating her indignation and mirth) the sages, Vashistha being the chief amongst them, said to her— (2).

[1]सीता प्रहसितानना

[Note :- This sarcastic smile resembled the one she had borne

when the sages were glorifying Sri Ram in Canto 17, verse no. 18-19½.]

सीते कथं श्रावितोऽयं रावणं राघवस्या ।
समुत्पन्नो विपाकोऽयं घोरो जनकनन्दिनि ।।३।।
क्व गता भ्रातरः सर्वे क्व गता वानरर्षभा ।
मन्त्रिणः क्व गता भद्रे रामस्य किमुपस्थितम् ।।४।।

'Oh Sita! Why did you tell this story of the 1000-headed Ravana[1] to Raghav (Sri Ram)? [See Canto 17.] Oh the daughter of Janak (Janki)! This horrendous consequence is the result of it[2] (3). No one knows where all the brothers (of Sri Ram) and the monkeys (i.e., the rest of the army of Sri Ram) has gone?[3] Oh gentle lady![4] Where have all the ministers gone?[5] What has happened to Sri Ram?[6]' (4). [3-4]

[1]कथं श्रावितोऽयं रावणं, [2]समुत्पन्नो विपाकोऽयं घोरा, [3]क्व गता सर्वे, [4]भद्रे, [5]मन्त्रिणः क्व गता, [6]रामस्य किमुपस्थितम्,

श्रुत्वैतद्वचनं तेषां मुनीनां भावितात्मनाम् ।
रामं तथाविधं दृष्ट्वा शयानं पुष्पकोपरि ।।५।।
पुण्डरीकनिभे नेत्रे निमील्य रणमूर्द्धति ।
आलिंग्य चोरसा सुप्तं प्रियामिव धनुः शरम् ।।६।।

Hearing these words of astonishment and dismay from the sages and observing that Sri Ram was lying unconscious on the Pushpak chariot-cum-plane[1], still holding his bow and arrow in his hands[2] and appearing to be fast asleep in the battlefield[3] with his lotus-like eyes closed shut[4], she embraced her unconscious husband[5] (5-6).

[1]शयानं पुष्पकोपरि, [2]धनुः शरम्, [3]रणमूर्द्धति, [4]पुण्डरीकनिभे नेत्रे, [5]आलिंग्य प्रियामिव

नर्दन्तं राक्षसं चापि महाबलपराक्रमम् ।
साट्टहासं विनद्योच्चैः सीता जनकनन्दिनी ।।७।।

Finding that the demon (Ravana) was cheering, jeering and rejoicing loudly[1] at his stupendous feat showcasing his matchless and great powers, potentials, strength, valour and punch[2], the daughter of Janak (Sita) laughed derisively with a shrill, bone chilling tone[3] (7).

[1]नर्दन्तं, [2]महाबलपराक्रमम्, [3]साट्टहासं विनद्योच्चैः

स्वरूपं प्रजहौ देवी महाविकटरूपिणी ।
क्षुत्क्षामा कोटराक्षी चक्रभ्रमितलोचना ।।८।।

The Goddess abandoned her previous calm, docile and sober form (as a human queen of Ayodhya)[1] and metamorphosed into a most ferocious, formidable and abominable form[2]. She resembled a hungry female ogre or a vampire[3] having widely roving eyes[4] (8).

[1]स्वरूपं प्रजहौ देवी, [2]महाविकटरूपिणी, [3]क्षुत्क्षामा कोटराक्षी, [4]चक्रभ्रमितलोचना

दीर्घजङ्घा महारावा मुण्डमालाविभूषणा ।
अस्थिकिङ्किणिका भीमा भीमवेगपराक्रमा ।।९।।

Her form had huge thighs[1] and a violent voice[2]; it was adorned by a garland of skulls[3] and bracelets of bones[4]; it was colossus and most formidable[5]; it was most invincible, valiant, strong and robust[6]; it was most swift, active and agile[7]; and it was very powerful, potent, majestic and stupendous[8] (9).

[1]दीर्घजङ्घा, [2]महारावा, [3]मुण्डमालाविभूषणा, [4]अस्थिकिङ्किणिका, [5]भीमा, [6]भीम, [7]वेग, [8]पराक्रमा

खारस्वरा महाघोरा विकृता विकृतानना ।
चतुर्भुजा दीर्घतुण्डा शिरोऽलङ्करणोज्ज्वला ।।१०।।

She had a sharp, shrill and high toned voice[1], was most formidable, potent, fierce and horrying[2], was terrifying and abominable[3] with a horrible, scowling, terrorising, bone chilling and hair raising fearful visage[4], and had 4 arms[5] and a large face[6]. She wore ornaments and other decorations on the head (headgear and a tiara) that were glowing and dazzling with fiery brightness and radiated the glow resembling a brightly burning fire[7] (10).

[1]खरस्वरा, [2]महाघोरा, [3]विकृता, [4]विकृतानना, [5]चतुर्भुजा, [6]दीर्घतुण्डा, [7]शिरोऽलङ्करणोज्ज्वला

ललज्जिह्वा जटाजूटैर्मण्डिता चण्डरोमिका ।
प्रलयाम्भोदकालाभा घण्टापाशविधारिणी ।।११।।

She had a long, protruding and lapping tongue (which was moistened with blood and saliva)[1], had a crown of matted tresses on her head[2] along with large, sharp, spear-like, strong and robust body hair[3]. She resembled the ocean at the time of the doomsday (when it is heaving and surging menacingly to drown the whole world with its anger)[4] as well as 'Kaal' (death) personified[5]. She held a chained whip in her hands[6] (11).

[1]ललज्जिह्वा, [2]जटाजूटैर्मण्डिता, [3]चण्डरोमिका, [4]प्रलयाम्भोद, [5]कालाभा, [6]घण्टापाशविधारिणी

अवस्कन्द्यरथात्तूर्णं खाङ्गखार्परधारिणी ।
श्येनीव रावणरथे पपात निमिषान्तरे ।।१२।।

She steeped down from the Pushpak chariot, holding a sword and a hollowed out skull in her hands[1]. She lunged[2] forward at the chariot of Ravana in a fraction of a moment[3] like a hawk or falcon bird swooping down on its prey[4] (12).

[1]खड्गखर्परधारिणी, [2]पपात, [3]निमिषान्तरे, [4]श्येनीव

शिरांसि रावणस्याशु निमेषान्तरमात्रतः ।
खड्गेन तस्य चिच्छेद सहस्राणीह लीलया ।।१३।।

In less then a fraction of a second[1], she severed (sliced off)[2] all the thousand heads of Ravana[3] playfully and magically, without the least effort[4], with one single swift swoop of the sword[5] (13).

[1]निमेषान्तरमात्रतः, [2]चिच्छेद, [3]सहस्राणीह शिरांसि, [4]लीलया, [5]खड्गेन

अन्येषां योद्धवीराणां शिरांसि नखरेण हि ।
भिन्ना निपातयामास भूमौ तेषां दुरात्मनाम् ।।१४।।

She pounced upon other brave demon warriors present there, piercing and lacerating their heads with her nails[1], resulting in those evil and sinful souls[2] tumble down from their mounts[3] like nine pins in the battlefield[4] (14).

[1]शिरांसि नखरेण भिन्ना, [2]दुरात्मनाम्, [3]निपातयामास, [4]भूमौ

केषाञ्चित्पाटयामास नख कोष्ठानि जानकी ।
खड्गेन चाच्छिनत्कांश्चित्क्रूरान्पादांश्च चिच्छिदे ।।१५।।

Janki (Sita) sliced the belly[1] of some of the demons by her sharp nails[2] and severed the legs and other vital organs[3] of others by her sword[4] as they fell down (15).

[1]कोष्ठानि चिच्छिदे, [2]नख, [3]चाच्छिनत्कांश्चित्क्रूरान्पादांश्च, [4]खड्गेन

खण्डं खण्डं चकारान्यांस्तिलशः कांश्चिदेव हि ।
अन्त्राण्यन्यस्याचकर्ष पादाघातेन कांश्चन ।।१६।।

The bodies of some of the demons were shredded and cut into pieces by the violent and swift swinging of her sword[1], the pieces becoming as small as sesame seeds[2], while some were trampled underfoot or viciously kicked like a football[3] and their intestines yanked out[4] (16).

[1]खण्डं खण्डं, [2]चकारान्यांस्तिलशः, [3]पादाघातेन, [4]न्यस्याचकर्ष

पार्श्वेन निजधानान्यान्पार्ष्णिनान्यानपोथयत् ।
कांश्चिच्छरीरवातेन दृष्ट्वाप्यन्यानपातयत् ।।१७।।

She attacked the demons present on her either sides most viciously[1]; some of them fell down merely by her glaring angry look (or they fainted just by a glance at her horribly terrifying form and her merciless, unrelenting offensive against them)[2]. Some were blown away by the blast of wind created by the hurtling and swift movement of her massive body, swaying and shifting so rapidly at break-neck speed that a virtual whirlwind-like powerful thrust was created which swept the demon warriors off their feet (like a tornado or twister moving across the battlefield)[3] (17).

[1]पार्श्वेन निज, [2]दृष्ट्वाप्यन्यानपातयत्, [3]कांश्चिच्छरीरवातेन

प्रलयं कुर्वती सीता राक्षसानां भयङ्करी ।
निजघानाट्टहासने कांश्चित्पृष्ठे द्विधाकरोत् ।।१८।।

The most horrifying, terribly ferocious, mercilessly vicious and extremely dreadful and unrelenting Sita (as Mahakali)[1] created a doomsday scenario for the demons and began their en-mass annihilation[2]. Letting out a bone chilling and hair raising shrill cry of war[3], she broke the backbone of some of them[4] (18).

[1]सीता भयङ्करी, [2]प्रलयं कुर्वती, [3]ऽट्टहासन, [4]कांश्चित्पृष्ठे द्विधाकरोत्

कांश्चित्केशान्समाकृष्य निष्पिपेष महीतले ।
सारथान्सगजान्साश्वान्सगदासहतोमरान् ।।१९।।
कांश्चिद्योधान्समाकृष्य मज्जयामास वारिधौ ।
गले चोद्बद्ध्य केषांश्चित्प्राणाञ्जग्राह जानकी ।।२०।।

Holding some by their hairs, she crushed them underfoot on the ground[1]. Some others were dragged along with their chariots, horses, elephants and Tomars (a type of weapon) in their hands and thrown into the ocean to drown[2]. Some were killed by Janki by strangulation[3] (19-20).

[1]निष्पिपेष महीतले, [2]मज्जयामास वारिधौ, [3]गले चोद्बद्ध्य

केषाञ्चित्स्कन्ध आरुह्य शिरांस्युत्पाटितानि हि ।
हुङ्कारेणाट्टहासेन काषाञ्चित्प्राणानहापयत् ।।२१।।

She jumped on the shoulders of some and bashed their heads[1]. Some were killed by the mere shock of her terrifying war cry, horrifying shrill yell and other hair-raising and bone-chilling ghoulish noises emanating from her throat[2]. [That is, some got heart attacks and they died instantly; some simply fainted out of terror; some collapsed when they saw her coming towards them; some were paralysed out of shock and some lost the strength of their knees to support them, wobbled, tottered and sank down unconscious to the ground, only to be trampled upon and crushed underfoot by the stampede.] (21)

[1]शिरांस्युत्पाटितानि, [2]हुङ्कारेणाट्टहासेन

कांश्चित्प्रचूर्ण्य वदनं पशुमारममारयत् ।
तान्सर्वान्निमिषेणैव निहत्य जनकात्मजा ।।२२।।

The heads of some were caught in a vice-like grip, fractured by a blow and killed as if they were animals of sacrifice[1]. In this way, the daughter of Janak, Janki, killed all of them in a 'Nimesh', i.e., a very short period of time[2] (22).

[1]पशुमारममारयत्, [2]सर्वान्निमिषेणैव निहत्य

तेषामन्त्रेण शिरसां मालाभिः कृतभूषणा ।
रावणस्य शिरांस्युग्राण्यादाय रणमूर्द्धनि ।।२३।।
कन्दुकक्रीडनं कर्तुं मनश्चक्रे मनस्विनी ।२३½।

She made a garland of their severed heads[1] and decorated herself with it[2]. She picked up the heads of Ravana lying on the battlefield[3] (23) and the wise and great Goddess (Mahakali)[4] decided to play football[5] with those heads in the battlefield itself (23½). [23-23½]

[1]शिरसां मालाभिः, [2]कृतभूषणा, [3]शिरांस्युग्राण्यादाय रणमूर्द्धनि, [4]मनस्विनी, [5]कन्दुकक्रीडनं कर्तुं मनश्चक्रे

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे तस्यां रोमकुपेभ्य उद्गताः ।।२४।।
मातरो विक्रताकाराः साट्टहासाः समाययुः ।
सह कन्दुकलीलार्थे सीतया ताः सहस्रशः ।।२५।।

At that moment, many horrible looking and most terrifying[1] mothers or female spirits of war (such as vampires, ogres, ghosts and phantoms)[2] emerged from the hairs on her skin[3]. They laughed menacingly and derisively in a dreadful and horrifying manner[4] and came to join her in the game (of football). They were thousands in numbers, and all of them helped Sita to play ball[5] with those thousands of heads[6] lying scattered all around on the slushy battlefield (24-25).

[1]विक्रताकाराः, [2]मातरो, [3]रोमकुपेभ्य उद्गताः, [4]साट्टहासाः, [5]कन्दुकलीलार्थे, [6]सहस्रशः

तासां कासाञ्चिदाख्यास्ये नामानि शृणुव्रत ।
याभिर्व्याप्तास्त्रयो लोका: कल्याणीभिश्चराचरा: ।।२६।।

Oh the righteous one (Bharadwaj)! Listen to the names of some of those female spirits of war who were present there but are nevertheless always present everywhere in all the three worlds (the nether, terrestrial and celestial worlds)[1]. They provide auspiciousness[2] to all the creatures of this world consisting of either the moveable or immoveable[3] creation (26).

[1]याभिर्व्याप्तास्त्रयो लोका:, [2]कल्याणी, [3]श्चराचरा:

[Note :- On the face of it, it appears to be incredulous to use the adjective 'Kalyani', literally meaning the one who provides auspiciousness and takes care of the welfare of others, or the one who bestows goodness and wellbeing upon the creatures of the world, for the spirits of the battlefield. But these spirits kill and devour demons who represent evil, wicked, sinful, pervert forces of creation that torment those who are good and righteous. By killing, vanquishing or annihilating them, these female spirits of war indirectly protect the other non-demonic creatures of the creation by providing them with freedom from fear and torment of the demons. It is equivalent to giving them auspiciousness and looking after their welfare and thinking for their good and wellbeing.]

प्रभावती विशालाक्षी पालिता गोनसी तथा ।
श्रीमती बहुला चैव तथैव बहुपुत्रिका ।।२७।।

[Now sage Valmiki lists the names of the female ogres and spirits of war that emerged from the hairs of Mahakali and played with her in the battlefield of Pushkar—] Prabhawati, Vishalakshi, Palita, Gonansi, Srimati, Bahula and Bahu Putrika (27).

अप्सुजाता च गोपाली वृहदम्बालिका तथा ।
जयावती मालतिका ध्रुवरत्ना भयङ्करी ।।२८।।

Apsujata, Gopali, Brihadambaalika, Jayawati, Maltika, Dhruvratna and Bhayankari (28).

वसुदामा सुदामा च विशोका नन्दिनी तथा ।
एकचूडा महाचूडा चक्रनेमिश्चटीतमा ।।२९।।

Vasudama, Sudama, Vishoka, Nandini, Ekchuda, Mahachuda,

Chakra Nemi and Titma (29).

उत्तेजनी जया सेना कमलाक्ष्यथ शोभना ।
शत्रुञ्जया तथा चैव क्रोधना शलभा खरी ।।३०।।

Uttejani, Jaya, Sena, Kamlakshya, Shobhana, Shatrunjaya, Krodhana, Shalbha and Khari (30).

माधवी शुभ्रवस्त्रा च तीर्थसेना जटोज्ज्वला ।
गीतप्रिया च कल्याणी कद्रुरोमामिताशना ।।३१।।

Madhavi, Shubhra Vastra, Tirthasena, Jatojwala, Gitpriya, Kalyani, Kadruroma and Amitaashna (31).

मेघस्वना भोगवती सुभ्रूश्च कनकावती ।
अलाताक्षी वेगवती विद्युज्जिह्वा च भारती ।।३२।।

Meghaswana, Bhogwati, Subhruscha, Kankawati, Alatakshi, Vegwati, Vidyujihawaha and Bharti (32).

पद्मावती सुनेत्रा च गन्धरा बहुयोजना ।
सन्नालिका महाकाली कमला च महाबला ।।३३।।

Padmawati, Sunetra, Gandhara, Bahuyojna, Sannalika, Mahakali, Kamla and Mahabala (33).

सुदामा बहुदामा च सुप्रभा च यशस्विनी ।
नृत्यप्रिया परानन्दा शतोलूखलमेखला ।।३४।।

Sudama, Bahudama, Suprabha, Yashaswini, Nrityapriya, Parananda, Shatalukhal and Mekhala (34).

शतघण्टा शतानन्दा आनन्दा भवतारिणी ।
वपुष्मती चन्द्रसीता भद्रकाली सटामला ।।३५।।

Shat Ghanta, Shata Nanda, Ananda, Bhavtarini, Vapshmati, Chandra Sita, Bhadrakali and Sataamalaa (35).

झंकारिका निष्कुटिका रामा चत्वरवासिनी ।
सुमला सुस्तनवती वृद्धिकामा जयप्रिया ।।३६।।

Jhankarika, Nishkutika, Rama, Chatwarvasini, Sumala, Sustanavati, Vridhikama, Jayapriya (36).

धना सुप्रसादा च भवदा च जनेश्वरी ।
एडी भेडी समेडी च वेतालजननी तथा ।।३७।।

Dhana, Suprasada, Bhavada, Janeshwari, Edi, Bhedi, Samedi and Vetaljanani (or the mother of phantoms) (37).

कन्दुति: कन्दुका चैव वेदमित्रा सुदेविका ।

लम्बास्या, केतकी, चित्रसेना, चलाचला ।।३८।।

Kanduti, Kanduka, Vedmitra, Sudevika, Lamvasya, Ketaki, Chitrasena and Chalaachalaa (38).

कुक्कुटिका श्रृंङ्गालिका तथा शंकुलिका हडा ।
कन्दालिका काकलिका कुम्भिकाय शतोदरी ।।३९।।

Kukkutika, Shringalika, Shankulika, Hada, Kandalika, Kaakalika, Kumbhikaye and Shatodari (39).

उत्क्राथिनी जवेला च महावेगा च कङ्किनी ।
मनोजवा कटकिनी प्रधसा पूतना तथा ।।४०।।

Utkrathini, Javela, Mahavega, Kankini, Manojwa, Katkini, Pradhasa and Putna (40).

खोशया चातिद्रढिमा कोशनाथतडित्प्रभा ।
मन्दोदरी च तुण्डोच कोटर मेघवाहिनी ।।४१।।

Kheshya, Atidradhima, Koshnath, Taditprabha, Mandodari, Tundoch, Kotara and Meghvahini (41).

सुभगा लम्बिनी लम्बा बसुचूडा विकत्थिनी ।
ऊर्ध्ववेणीधरा चैव पिङ्गाक्षी लोहमेखला ।।४२।।

Subhaga, Lambini, Lambaa, Vasuchuda, Vikathini, Urdhvavenidhara, Pingakakshi and Lohamekhala (42).

पृथुवक्त्रा मधुलिहा मधुकुम्भा तथैव च ।
यक्षाणिका मत्सरिका जरायुर्जर्जरानना ।।४३।।

Prithuvaktra, Madhuliha, Madhukumbha, Vakshanika, Matsarika, Jarau and Jarjaranana (43).

ख्याता डहडहा चैव तथा धमधमा द्विजा ।
खण्डखण्डा पृथुश्रोणी पूषणामणिकुट्टिका ।।४४।।

Khyata, Dahadaha, Dhamdhamaa, Dwija, Khandkhandaa, Prithushroni, Pushna and Manikuttika (44).

अम्लोचा चैव निम्लोचा तथा लम्बपयोधरा ।
वेणुवीणाधरा चैव पिङ्गाक्षी लोहमेखला ।।४५।।

Amlocha, Nimlocha, Lambpayodhara, Venuvinadhara, Pingakshi and Lohamekhala (45).

शशोलूकमुखी हृष्टा खरजङ्घा महाजरा ।
शिशुमारमुखी श्वेता लोहिताक्षी विभीषणा ।।४६।।

Sasholukmukhi, Hristha, Kharjangha, Mahajara, Sishumarmukhi,

Shweta, Lohitakshi and Vibhishana (46).

जटालीका कामचरी दीर्घजिह्वाबलोत्कटा ।
कालहिका यामालिका मुकुटामुकुटेश्वरी ।।४७।।

Jatalika, Kaamchari, Dirghajihvaha, Balotkata, Kalahika, Yamalika, Mukuta and Mukuteshwari (47).

लोहिताक्षी महाकाया हविष्पिण्डा च पिण्डिका ।
एकत्वचना सुकूर्मा च कुल्लाकर्णी च कर्णिका: ।।४८।।

Lohitakshi, Mahakaya, Havishpindika, Pindika, Ektwacha, Sukurma, Kullakarni and Karnika (48).

सुरकर्णी चतुष्कर्णी कर्णप्रावरणा तथा ।
चतुष्पथनिकेता च गोकर्णी महिषानना ।।४९।।

Surkarni, Chatushkarni, Karnapravarna, Chatushpathniketa, Gokarni and Mahishaananaa (49).

खारकर्णी महाकर्णी भेरीस्वनमहास्वना ।
शङ्खकुम्भश्रवा चैव भगदा च महाबला ।।५०।।

Kharkarni, Mahakarni, Bheriswana, Mahaswana, Shankha-Kumbha-Srawa, Bhagada and Mahabala (50).

गणा च सुगणा चैव कामदाप्यथ कन्यका ।
चतुष्पथरता चैव भूतितीर्थान्यगोचरा ।।५१।।

Gana, Sugana, Kaamdapyath, Kanyaka, Chatushpathrataa, Bhutitirtha and Anyagochara (51).

पशुदा विमुदा चैव सुखदा च महायशा: ।
पयोदा गोमहिषदा सुविशाला चतुर्भुजा ।।५२।।

Pashuda, Vimuda, Sukhda, Mahayasha, Payoda, Gomhishda, Suvishala and Chaturbhuja (52).

प्रतिष्ठा सुप्रतिष्ठा च रोचमाना सुलोचना ।
नौकर्णी मुखकर्णी च विशिरा मन्थिनी तथा ।।५३।।

Prathistha, Su-Prathistha, Rochmana, Sulochana, Naukarni, Mukhkarni, Vishira and Manthini (53).

एकवक्त्रा मेघरवा मेघवामा द्विरोचना ।
एताश्चान्याश्च बहवो मातर: कोटिकोटिश: ।।५४।।
असंख्याता: समाजग्मु:क्रीडितुं सीतया सह ।
दीर्घवक्ष्ये दीर्घदन्त्यो दीर्घतुण्ड्यो द्विजोत्तम ।।५५।।

Ekvaktra, Meghrawa, Meghvama and Dwirochna. Besides them

(listed above from verse no. 27-53½), there were thousands and thousands of other 'mothers'[1] (54) who had arrived on the battlefield to play around[2] with Sita as Mahakali.

[Now, instead of detailing their names, I shall broadly describe to you their features —] Oh exalted sage (Bharadwaj)[3]! Some of them had broad chests[4], others had large teeth[5] and large nostrils[6] (55). [54-55]

[1]मातरः कोटिकोटिशः, [2]जग्मु:क्रीडितुं, [3]द्विजोत्तम, [4]दीर्घवक्ष्ये, [5]दीर्घदन्त्यो, [6]दीर्घतुण्ड्यो

सरसा मधुराश्चैव यौवनस्थः स्वलंकृताः ।
महात्म्येन च संयुक्ताः कामरूपधरास्तथा ।।५६।।

They were pleasing and charming and sweet talking[1], were in their prime of youth[2], were fully decorated[3], were endowed with the glory of fame, majesty and importance[4], and could assume any form they wished[5] (56).

[1]सरसा मधुर, [2]यौवनस्थः, [3]स्वलंकृताः, [4]महात्म्येन च संयुक्ताः, [5]कामरूपधरास्तथा

निर्मांसगात्र्यः श्वेताश्च तथा काञ्चनसन्निभाः ।
कृष्णमेघनिभाश्चान्या धूम्राश्च द्विजपुङ्गव ।।५७।।

Oh exalted sage (Bharadwaj)[1]! Some had no flesh on their bodies (i.e., they were merely skeletons covered by a skin)[2]; some had white or golden countenance[3] while still others were dark complexioned like dark clouds[4], or had the colour of smoke[5] (57).

[1]द्विजपुङ्गव, [2]निर्मांसगात्र्यः, [3]श्वेता काञ्चनसन्निभाः, [4]कृष्णमेघ, [5]धूम्राश्च

अरुणाभा महाभागा दीर्घकेश्यः सिताम्बराः ।
ऊर्ध्ववेणीधराश्चैव पिङ्गाक्ष्या लम्बमेखलाः ।।५८।।

Some had red coloured skin[1], some were more fortunate than others[2], some had long hairs[3], some wore white garments[4], some had their hairs tied in a big knot (bun)[5], some had yellow-tinged eyes[6], and some had long or large 'Mekhala' on their bodies[7]. [Mekhala has 3 connotations— (i) a bracelet, (ii) a waistband, and (iii) a sleeveless blouse.] (58)

[1]अरुणाभा, [2]महाभागा, [3]दीर्घकेश्यः, [4]सिताम्बराः, [5]ऊर्ध्ववेणीधरा, [6]पिङ्गाक्ष्या, [7]लम्बमेखलाः

लम्बोदर्यो लम्बकर्णस्तथा लम्बपयोधराः ।
ताम्राक्ष्यस्ताम्रवर्णाश्च हर्यक्ष्यश्च तथापराः ।।५९।।

They had large tummies[1] and elongated ears[2], huge and broad lips[3], read copper coloured eyes[4] which were large[5] and supernatural in

appearance[6] (59).

[1]लम्बोदर्यो, [2]लम्बकर्ण, [3]लम्बपयोधराः, [4]ताम्राक्ष्य, [5]हर्यक्ष्यश्च, [6]पराः

शत्रूणां विग्रहे नित्यं भयदास्ता भवत्यपि ।
कामरूपधराश्चैव जवे वायुसमास्तथा ।।६०।।

They could perpetually instill fear[1] in the bodies of their enemies[2]. They could assume any form that they wished[3], and were as swift as the wind[4] (60).

[1]भयदास्ता, [2]शत्रूणां विग्रहे, [3]कामरूपधरा, [4]जवे वायुसमा

शिरांसि रक्षसां गृह्य गण्डशैलोपमान्यपि ।
चक्रीडुः सीतया सार्द्ध तस्मिन्रणधरातले ।।६१।।

Catching hold of the huge severed heads of the demons which were colossus like the summit of mountains[1], these lady spirits of war started playing a game of ball with them on the surface of the earth (i.e., in the battlefield)[2] (61).

[1]शिरांसि गण्डशैलोपमान्यपि, [2]धरातले

मुण्डमालाधराश्चैव काश्चिन्मुण्ड विभूषणाः ।
रणाङ्गणे महाघोरे गृध्रकङ्कशिवान्विते ।।६२।।
मांसासृक्पंकिले घोरे तत्र तत्र पुरोपमे ।
ननर्त जानकी देवी घोर काली महाबला ।।६३।।

Some wore a garland of skulls or severed heads[1] while others wore ornaments made out of them[2]. The most abominable, horrifying and mortifying field of war[3] had scowling, crowing and howling hordes of vultures[4], kites and crows[5] as well as jackals[6] (62) hopping, howling, growling, gnawing and tearing away at fallen warriors and animals, and scampering around the marsh-like slushy ground created by blood kneaded with flesh and mud of the earth[7]. It was like a most horrendous, utterly horrifying and extremely ghastly city of the dead[8]. In it, Goddess Janki (Sita), in her terrible, horrifying, most awe inspiring, abominable and ghostly form[9] as the most powerful and strong Mahakali[10], danced skittishly and frantically in a mad frenzy here and there, everywhere, in that fearful, ghostly and desolate city of the dead[11] (63). [62-63]

[1]मुण्डमालाधरा, [2]मुण्ड विभूषणाः, [3]रणाङ्गणे महाघोरे, [4]गृध्र, [5]कङ्क, [6]शिवान्विते, [7]मांसासृक्पंकिल, [8]घोरे पुरोपमे, [9]घोर, [10]काली महाबला, [11]घोरे तत्र तत्र पुरोपमे

तदा चकम्पे पृथिवी नौरिवानिलचालिता ।
चेलुश्च भूधराः सर्वे समुद्राश्च चकम्पिरे ।।६४।।

The shaking and trembling of the earth at that time resembled a boat buffeted and tossed about by the wind on a rough sea. All the mountains and oceans shook and trembled (64).

स्वर्गिणा च विमानानि खात्पेतुर्भयतो द्विज ।
सूर्यस्य दुद्रुवुर्भीता वाजिनो मुक्तरश्मयः ।।६५।।

Oh Brahmin (Bharadwaj)! The air planes of Gods started falling down from the sky out of terror[1], and the horses of the Sun's chariot went off their path[2] (65).

[1]विमानानि खात्पेतुर्भयतो, [2]वाजिनो मुक्त

यदा न सेहे जानक्याः भारं सोढुं वसुन्धरा ।
गन्तुमैच्छत पातालं सीतापादाग्रपीडिता ।।६६।।
अट्टाहासेन सीताया मातृणां हुंकृतेन च ।
प्रलयं मेनिरे लोकाः किमेतदिति विह्वलाः ।।६७।।

When the 'Vasundhara' (earth) could not bear the burden of Sita (as Mahakali) and began sinking into the nether world[1] under the pressure of her feet[2] (66), and there was a horrifying cacophony created by Sita's delirious, shrill laughter[3] accompanied by the aggressive posturing, stomping and war cries of the 'mother spirits of war'[4] who had assembled there, all the creatures took it to be the ominous sign of an imminent catastrophic disaster the like of which occurs during the doomsday[5], and consequentially they lost their patience and became very agitated, restless and terrified[6] (67). [66-67]

[1]गन्तुमैच्छत पातालं, [2]सीतापादाग्रपीडिता, [3]अट्टाहासेन सीताया, [4]मातृणां हुंकृतेन, [5]प्रलयं मेनिरे, [6]विह्वलाः

धरापातालगमनं वितर्क्य सुरसत्तमैः ।
सम्प्रार्थितो महादेवः स्वयमायाद्रणाजिरम् ।।६८।।

Watching the earth sinking into the nether worlds, the Gods prayed to Mahadev (Lord Shiva) to intervene (and prevent the earth from disappearing into nowhere). Then the Lord came to the battlefield himself (68).

जानक्याः पादविन्यासे शवरूपधरो हरः ।
आत्मानं स्तम्भयामास धरणीधृतिहेतवे ।।६९।।

Shiva assumed the form of a corpse[1] and lay himself[2] under the feet of Janki (Mahakali)[3] in order to protect the earth from sinking further (i.e., Lord Shiva acted as a cushion between Sita's feet and the earth, and he prevented the downward thrust of her leg from pushing the earth further down or splitting and cracking it under the pressure of her foot)[4] (69).

[1]शवरूपधरो हरः, [2]आत्मानं, [3]जानक्याः पादविन्यासे, [4]धरणीधृतिहेतवे

सर्वभारसहो देवः सीतापादतले स्थितः ।
शवरूपो विरूपाक्षः स्थिताभूद्धरा तदा ।।७०।।

When Lord Shiva placed himself under the feet of Mahakali[1], disguised unconventionally as a dead body[2] and bore the brunt of her force and weight[3], it was only then that the earth became stabilised[4] and stopped subsiding further (70).

[1]सीतापादतले स्थितः, [2]शवरूपो विरूपाक्षः, [3]सर्वभारसहो, [4]स्थिताभूद्धरा तदा

तथाप्युरिगा लोका न स्थातु सेहिरे क्षणम् ।
सीतायाः पादशब्देन शिरसा हुंकृतेन च ।
निःश्वासवातसङ्घातेर्दुःस्थिता भूर्भुवादयः ।।७१।।

But the worlds above the earth still could not become stable. By the sound of Sita's (Mahakali's) feet stomping violently and angrily on the ground and kicking at other things in the battlefield[1], by the aggressive loud yells or the vicious war cry emanating from the clenched teeth in her mouth[2], and by the thrust of the powerful breath coming out with force from her nostrils, and the vacuum created by her violently inhaling breath[3] —all the worlds, such as Bhu (the terrestrial world), Bhuvaha (the celestial world) and Swaha (the heavens) remained extremely agitated and restless (i.e., they swayed and trembled when lashed by these two powerful gusts of wind— coming out and going in through her nostrils and open mouth)[4] (71).

[1]पादशब्देन, [2]शिरसा हुंकृतेन, [3]निःश्वासवातसङ्घाते, [4]दुःस्थिता भूर्भुवादयः

धरणितनयया यद्भीमनृत्यं धरण्यां
कृतमिह मनसा तच्चिन्तयन्तो द्विजेन्द्राः ।
जयति जयति सीतेत्याहुरिन्द्रादिदेवाः
सपदि भुवन भंगं मन्यमाना विषेदुः ।।७२।।

The great dance —which was unprecedented, most formidable,

extremely horrifying, awe inspiring, spirit stirring, bone chilling and hair raising —was akin to the dance of death portending the annihilation of the creation at the time of doomsday[1]. This dance was performed by the daughter of mother earth (Sita)[2] on the surface of the earth itself (i.e., on the battlefield)[3]. It instilled terrible awe and compelled the wonderstruck exalted sages and seers[4] as well as the other Gods such as Indra[5] to regretfully think[6] that the splitting or breaking apart of the world (i.e., the annihilation of the creation)[7] was imminent. Consequentially, they felt very remorseful and anguished[8], but then decided to praise the stupendous glories, the majestic powers, the matchless strength and unparalleled prowess as well as the cosmic supernatural potentials of Sita— who was a manifestation of the divine cosmic force of Mother Nature called 'Shakti' and was now disguised as Mahakali in the battlefield of Pushkar— in chorus, with a loud and raised voice of applause, in order to calm her down by lauding her glories in these words— 'Glory to you, blessed be you[9]' (72).

[1]यद्भीमनृत्यं, [2]धरणितनयया, [3]धरण्यां, [4]द्विजेन्द्राः, [5]इन्द्रादिदेवाः, [6]मनसा तच्चिन्तयन्तो, [7]सपदि भुवन भंगं मन्यमाना, [8]विषेदुः, [9]जयति जयति

[Note :- They were so awestricken, stunned and alarmed at the developments that they tried to calm her down by praising and lauding her because they knew that the anger of the Goddess could finally, if not brought under control immediately, annihilate the entire creation. They dared not admonish or reproach her or say anything to annoy her anymore, such as to warn her not to tinker with the process of creation and evolution. They did not wish to add fuel to the already raging fire and further stoke her anger, as they feared that she might now turn at them in disgust for having brought about all this. To calm her down, they began to pray to her so that she feels that the sages and seers and the Gods were happy at her deeds, and then when she has cheered up a bit, attempt would be made to make her see reason. But as of now, the prime concern was to douse the fire of her anger, vehemenance and wrath.]

Thus ends Canto 23 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing how Sita had assumed the most ferocious form of Goddess Mahakali and how Ravana was killed by her. This Canto also describes the fearful scenario of the battlefield.

——*—*

Canto 24

Sri Ram revived back to life by Brahma, the creator, and he was reassured by him that everything was alright when he got terrified at the sight of the ferocious Sita in the form of Mahakali in the battlefield, and the havoc that she had caused all around

Realising that if Sita, as Mahakali, the great Goddess of death and destruction, is not somehow calmed down, the creation was on the brink of complete annihilation by her anger and wrath, the creator Brahma led all the Gods in prayer to appease and please her. When she pointed at Sri Ram lying unconscious on the chariot and her determination not to spare anything in the world as a retribution and punishment for bringing this calamitous thing to happen, the creator and the Gods touched Sri Ram and got him back to life. Regaining consciousness, Sri Ram saw Mahakali in her ferocious form and he was extremely terrified at the sight. Then Brahma made him aware of the developments that had taken place during the time when he had lain unconscious on the chariot and Sita had avenged his falling down in the battle by killing all the demons single handedly. With this insight, Sri Ram felt somehow reassured and regained his composure.

संरम्भवेगं सीताया वीक्ष्य ब्रह्मपुरोगमाः ।
सलोकपालास्त्रिदशा ऋषिभिः पितृभिः सह ।।१।।
प्रसादयितुमुद्युक्ता सीतां ते तुष्टुवुः सुरा ।
कृताञ्जलिपुटा देवाः प्रणम्य च पुनः पुनः ।।२।।

Observing such a vehemently uncompromising, relentlessly vengeful, ferociously wrathful, cruelly unforgiving and the mercilessly vicious anger, wrath and speed[1] by which Sita, as Mahakali, not only laid to waste the entire army of demons but was now poised to annihilate the rest of the world (see verse nos. 23-24 below), all the Gods, sages and seers and the spirits of dead ancestors (called Pittars) joined the creator Brahma to pay tributes to her stupendous cosmic powers and pray to her to calm down; they tried to appease and placate her[2] before any calamitous event could happen. They repeatedly bowed reverentially before her[3] with folded hands, politely and submissively[4] (1-2).

[1]संरम्भवेगं वीक्ष्य, [2]प्रसादयितुमुद्युक्ता सीतां ते तुष्टुवुः, [3]प्रणम्य च पुनः पुनः, [4]कृताञ्जलिपुटा

ब्रह्माद्या स्तोतुमारब्धाः सीतां राक्षसनाशिनीम् ।
या सा माहेश्वरी शक्तिर्ज्ञानरूपातिलालसा ।।३।।
अनन्या निष्कले तत्त्वे संस्थिता रामवल्लभा ।
स्वाभाविकी च त्वन्मूला प्रभा भानोस्तथामला ।।४।।

Brahma and others began to pray respectfully to Sita who was the annihilator of demons[1] as follows— 'The great divine Goddess of the entire creation, who is an embodiment and personification of energy and strength, powers and potentials as well as an eager pursuer of wisdom, erudition and sagacity[2] (3), has manifested herself in the form of the dear wife of Sri Ram[3]. She (Sita) is basically measureless and infinite[4] (as the macrocosmic, attributeless, all powerful and majestic source of stupendous energy of creation) and she is without any blemishes, taints, faults and shortcoming[5]. The cosmic divine energy called Shakti has its existence because of you (i.e., you are an embodiment of that energy as the cosmic Goddess)[6] and your glory and radiance is as pure, brilliant and shining as the splendour of the Sun[7] (3-4).

[1]राक्षसनाशिनीम्, [2]शक्तिर्ज्ञानरूपातिलालसा, [3]संस्थिता रामवल्लभा, [4]अनन्या तत्त्वे, [5]निष्कले, [6]स्वाभाविकी च त्वन्मूला, [7]प्रभा भानोस्तथामला

एका सा वैष्णवी शक्ति रणे कोपाधिवेगतः ।
परापरेण रूपेण क्रीडन्ति समसन्निधो ।।५।।

That is the only 'Vaishnavi Shakti' (i.e., the stupendous powers and strengths of Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer and protector of

this universe, unleashed to protect the creation against being tormented by evil forces represented by the demons)[1] that is playing[2] around angrily with a blinding speed[3] near Sri Ram in the battlefield. She is in her supernatural form at present[4] (5).

[1]वैष्णवी शक्ति, [2]क्रीडन्ति, [3]कोपाधिवेगतः, [4]परापरेण

सेव्यं करोति सकलं तस्याः कोर्यमिदं जगत् ।
न कार्य चापि करणमीश्वरश्चेति निश्चयः ।।६।।

She is the divine, cosmic, subtle and supernatural energy that performs all the tasks of this world[1] and then enjoys them[2]. The supreme Lord called Ishwar[3] surely does not do anything himself[4] (i.e., the Lord needs the divine comic powers, called Shakti, to carry out his wishes and sustain and protect this creation; without her help, the Lord is helpless indeed, though this Shakti has been created by the Lord himself in order to carry out his responsibilities) (6).

[1]करोति सकलं तस्याः कोर्यमिदं जगत्, [2]सेव्यं, [3]मीश्वर, [4]न कार्य चापि करण निश्चयः

चतस्रः शक्तयो देव्याः स्वरूपत्वेन संस्थिताः ।
अधिष्ठान वशादस्या जानक्या रामयोषितः ।।७।।

The stupendous powers, prowess and potentials[1] of the Goddess have four forms or manifestations as it is revealed in four ways[2]. [See verse no. 8 below.] Because of delusions and ignorance about the actual reality, resulting in the creation of illusions and deceptions[3], one believes that Janki (Sita) is the consort of Sri Ram and dependent on him[4] (7).

[1]शक्तयो, [2]चतस्रः, [3]अधिष्ठान, [4]जानक्या रामयोषितः

शान्तिर्विद्या प्रतिष्ठा न निवृत्तिश्चेति ताः स्मृताः ।
चतुर्व्यूहस्ततो देवः प्रोच्यते परमेश्वरः ।।८।।

'Shanti' (peace, serenity, calmness and tranquility, bliss and beatitude)[1], 'Vidya' (truthful knowledge, erudition, wisdom, sagacity, skill and expertise)[2], 'Pratistha' (fame, majesty, renown, good name, respect, honour, dignity and reputation)[3] and 'Nivritti' (renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement)[4] —these are the 4 great characters[5] that define Lord 'Parmeshwar' (the supreme, transcendental Lord of creation)[6] (8).

[1]शान्ति, [2]र्विद्या, [3]प्रतिष्ठा, [4]निवृत्ति, [5]चतुर्व्यूह, [6]देवः परमेश्वरः

अनया परया देवः स्वात्मानन्दं समश्नुते ।

यत्त्वस्त्यनादिसंसिद्धमैश्वर्यमतुलं महत् ।।९।।
त्वत्सम्बन्धांवाप्तं तद्रामेण परमात्मना ।
सैषा सर्वेश्वरी देवी सर्भभूतप्रवर्तिका ।।१०।।

It is through the supreme, transcendental and divine 'Shakti' (energy, power, strength and potentials)[1] that the Lord derives 'bliss of the self' (i.e., he enjoys the peace and tranquility associated with the Atma/soul because he does not have to bother about the nitty-gritty of the day to day administration of the creation which he has himself created, but has now left on this 'Shakti' of his to take care of; the Lord is freed from the worries of the routine work of the creation and as a consequence he has the time to devote to meditation and contemplation upon his Atma that gives him eternal peace and bliss)[2]. He who is eternal and has no beginning or end[3], who is fully accomplished and fulfilled[4], who is incomparable, unparalleled and unique[5], and who possesses supreme greatness, majesty, fame and glory[6] (9) —that supreme, divine, sublime and transcendental entity is known as Sri Ram (i.e., it has manifested or revealed itself in the body of Sri Ram)[7]. Sri Ram is the 'Parmatma', the supreme Lord, the supreme Atma of the creation[8], and he is accessible only through you (i.e., through the gracious Sita who is his divine, merciful and almighty counterpart, and by her benevolent help, interceding on the behalf of devotees)[9]. Such a divine, all powerful Goddess[10] is the progenitor and inspirer of all the creatures[11] (10). [9-10]

[1]परया, [2]स्वात्मानन्दं, [3]अनादि, [4]संसिद्ध, [5]मतुलं, [6]मैश्वर्य महत्, [7]तद्रामेण, [8]परमात्मना, [9]त्वत्सम्बन्धांवाप्तं, [10]सर्वेश्वरी देवी, [11]सर्भभूत

त्वयेदं भ्रामयेदीशो मायावी पुरुषोत्तमः ।
सैषा मायात्मिका शक्तिः सर्वाकारा सनातनी ।।११।।

The supreme Lord has assumed the illusionary form of 'Purushottam' (literally, the most exalted and the best male in creation; here meaning Sri Ram)[1], and this form moves around and shows signs of activity and life because of you (i.e., because of Sita; Sri Ram is active and appears to do everything in this world because it is you who makes it possible to happen, but the credit goes to Sri Ram)[2]. This stupendous, maverick, magical and imperceptible 'Shakti'[3] can

assume any form that it wishes and has the authority to do whatever it likes and thinks fit to do[4]. It is primary, ancient and existent from the beginning of creation[5] (11).

[1]मायावी पुरुषोत्तमः, [2]भ्रामयेदीशो, [3]मायात्मिका शक्तिः, [4]सर्वाकारा, [5]सनातनी

वैश्वरूपं महेशस्य सर्वदा सम्प्रकाशयेत् ।
अन्याश्च शक्तये मुख्यास्त्वा देवि विनिर्मिता ।।१२।।

The macrocosmic, all pervading and all encompassing form[1] of Lord Shiva[2] is always highlighted by you[3]. [That is, the continuous process of death that occurs in all the corners of the creation is an activity that is carried out by you, but since this is the designated duty of Lord Shiva, who has been entrusted with the job of causing death, decay and destruction, or in short, maintaining the ecological balance and bringing about the conclusion of the creation into effect, it appears to be done by him whereas in fact it is you who actually does it. The occurrence of 'death' establishes —or highlights — the eminent presence of 'Shiva' factor in creation, but subtly it is you who brings death about). Further, 'Shiva' also refers to auspiciousness, enlightenment and truth. Therefore, these virtues in creation are brought to the fore by your grace and magnanimity.

Oh Goddess! All other chief 'Shaktis' (powers and potentials)[4] in this world have also been created or produced[5] by you and no one else (12).

[1]वैश्वरूपं, [2]महेशस्य, [3]सर्वदा सम्प्रकाशयेत्, [4]अन्याश्च शक्तये, [5]देवि विनिर्मिता

ज्ञानशक्तिः क्रियाशक्तिः प्रणशक्तिरिति त्रयम् ।
सर्वासामेव शक्तीनां शक्तिमन्तो विनिर्मिता ।।१३।।

[Now, Brahm lists some of the great potentials, prowess and strengths of creation that the great Goddess has produced—]

'Gyan Shakti' (the strength of knowledge and wisdom)[1], 'Kriya Shakti' (the strength of action and deeds, or the strength to perform deeds and take action)[2], 'Pran Shakti' (the stupendous ability and strength of Pran, the vital wind force present inside the creature, or the ability to bear life and the powers associated with something that is alive)[3] —these are called 'Triad of Shaktis'[4]. All the Shaktis (powers, strength, potentials, vitalities, abilities and prowess) that exist in this creation[5] as well those who possess this

Shakti[6], both have been created or produced by you[7] (13).

[1]ज्ञानशक्तिः, [2]क्रियाशक्तिः, [3]प्रणशक्ति, [4]त्रयम्, [5]सर्वासामेव शक्तीनां, [6]शक्तिमन्तो, [7]विनिर्मिता

एका शक्तिः शिवोप्येकः शक्तिमानुच्यते शिवः ।
अभेदं चातुपश्यन्ति योगिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ।।१४।।

Essentially, the fundamental 'Shakti' is one (i.e., energy is one; it assumes various forms and names according to the use to which it is put, but the basic spirit and driving force is the same —such as we have electric, kinetic, sound, light, magnetic energies etc.)[1]. There is only one divine being to command this Shakti, and that is Lord Shiva[2]. Yogis (ascetics) who are well versed and expert in the basics of the essential knowledge[3] do not regard any difference between the two of them (i.e., they don't see any duality between Shakti and Shiva)[4] (14).

[1]एका शक्तिः, [2]शक्तिमानुच्यते शिवः, [3]योगिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः, [4]अभेदं चातुपश्यन्ति,

[Note :- (i) Science has established that energy changes its form, e.g., kinetic energy can be converted to heat energy, sound energy, electric energy and light energy. Similarly, electric energy can be converted to heat, sound, light and kinetic energies, and so on and so forth.

(ii) The word 'Shakti' has many connotations —e.g., (a) energy, strength, power, vitality, vigour, might, authority, push, potential etc.; (b) Goddess Parvati is the divine Goddess who is the consort of the great Lord of creation, Lord Shiva, and it is from her that all other Goddesses are said to have originated; hence she is also called the 'Mother of Creation' or 'Mother Goddess'; (c) the 'primordial primary cosmic energy' that sparked off the chain reaction that not only created the cosmos but still goes on powering its development and evolution until the time it would be dissolved back into its primary form. In essence, this energy would only change its form at the time of the conclusion of this phase of creation, when it would have fallen back and merged into its original, primary form. The energy will once again incite and activate the primordial cosmic jelly to restart the whole process once again. That is why the cycle of creation and destruction goes on endlessly because energy can only change its form but is never either decimated or completely annihilated; (d) Lord Shiva is the divine husband or Lord who wields authority over that stupendous Shakti that has manifested itself in the form of Parvati. The word 'Shiva' also means 'beautiful and truthful, auspicious and holy, enlightened and wise, erudite and sagacious, dispassionate and detached'. Hence, all that was truthful, beautiful, auspicious, strong, powerful and authoritative was represented in the form of Shiva who remains completely detached and indifferent to his own creation, being the supreme Ascetic, leaving the humdrum chores of its maintenance to his divine half, Parvati, who is also known by the name of 'Shakti'.]

शक्तयो जानकी देवी शक्तिमन्तो हि राघवः ।
विशेषः कथ्यते चायं पुराणे तत्त्ववादिभिः ।।१५।।

[Drawing a parallel with Sri Ram and Sita, Brahma said —] Janki Devi (Goddess Sita) is 'Shakti' personified[1], while Sri Ram (Raghav) is the authority who is the Lord of that Shakti (i.e., who commands that power and energy)[2]. Experts in the basics of the essential knowledge of this creation[3] have specially emphasised this point[4] in the Purans[5] (15).

[1]शक्तयो जानकी देवी, [2]शक्तिमन्तो हि राघवः, [3]तत्त्ववादिभिः, [4]विशेषः कथ्यते, [5]पुराणे

[Note :- Brahma has equated Sita with mother Goddess of creation, i.e., Parvati, and Sri Ram with the Lord of Parvati, Lord Shiva, respectively. Or, Sri Ram with Viraat Purush and Sita with Mother Nature..]

भोग्या विश्वेश्वरी देवी रघूत्तमपतिव्रता ।
प्रोच्यते भगवान्भोक्ता रघुवंशविवर्द्धनः ।।१६।।

The Goddess of the world[1] who is the loyal wife[2] of the most exalted and excellent member of the Raghu's clan (i.e., Sri Ram)[3], is regarded as 'Bhogya' (literally, one who is used by his Lord or who serves him; here referring to Sita who serves Sri Ram in his worldly incarnation as well as in his divine comic form; Sita acts as his assistant in carrying out the duty of sustenance and protection of the creation), while the Lord (Sri Ram)[4] who enhances the glory and fame of Raghu's clan[5] is the one who has the authority over her and is her unquestioned Lord[6] (16).

[1]विश्वेश्वरी देवी, [2]पतिव्रता, [3]रघूत्तम, [4]भोग्या, [5]भगवान्भोक्ता, [6]रघुवंशविवर्द्धन:

मन्ता रामो मति: सीता मन्तव्या च विचारत: ।
एकं सर्वगतं सूक्ष्मं कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ।।१७।।

Sita is 'Mati' (intellect, sense, understanding, thought, discrimination belief, desire, inclination, opinion, view—i.e., all the functions and activities of the mind and intellect)[1], while Sri Ram is the 'authority' who has this 'Mati' (i.e., who is intelligent, wise, uses his commonsense, has understanding, erudition and wisdom, can think, analyse, discriminate and judge, has firm beliefs and convictions, has auspicious desires and inclinations, has firm opinion and views on any given subject)[2]. It is worthwhile to ponder and discuss[3] on this subject thoughtfully, intelligently and wisely[4] using logic, discrimination and powers to think rationally. They are one, inseparable and indistinguishable from one another[5]; they are all-pervading, immanent and omnipresent[6]; they are subtle and sublime[7]; they are stable, unwavering, constant, steady, persistent and perpetual[8]. This is an unquestioned, undisputed and an irrefutable fact[9] (17).

[1]मति: सीता, [2]मन्ता रामो, [3]विचारत:, [4]मन्तव्या, [5]एकं, [6]सर्वगत, [7]सूक्ष्मं, [8]मचल, [9]ध्रुवम्

योगिनस्तत्प्रपश्यन्ति तव देव्या: ।
अनन्तमजरं ब्रह्म केवलं निष्कलं परम् ।।१८।।

Oh Goddess! Yogis (ascetics) are able to have a divine vision of your supreme abode[1]. That supreme abode is synonymous with that of Brahm[2] who is eternal, infinite and without an end[3], who does not decay as he is imperishable[4], who is one and the only one of his kind[5], who is without blemishes and faults of any kind[6], and who is the paramount, transcendental and Supreme Being who is beyond everything[7] (18).

[1]परं पदम्, [2]ब्रह्म, [3]अनन्त, [4]मजरं, [5]केवलं, [6]निष्कलं, [7]परम

योगिनस्तत्प्रपश्यन्ति तव देव्या: परं पदम् ।
सा त्वं धात्रीव परमा आनन्दनिधिमिच्छताम् ।।१९।।

Oh Goddess! Yogis (ascetics) are able to have a divine glimpse of your supreme abode[1]. Those who desire to attain that supreme abode of yours, which is a treasury of supreme beatitude and felicity[2], for them you are the great medium or path that can help them fulfill their dreams or wishes[3] (and help them attain supreme bliss) (19).

[1]परं पदम्, [2]परमा आनन्दनिधिमिच्छताम्, [3]धात्रीव परमा

संसारतापानखिलान्हरसीश्वरसंश्रयात् ।
नेदानीं भूतसंहारस्त्वया कार्यो महेश्वरी ।।२०।।

In company of Ishwar (the supreme Lord) and making a joint effort with him[1], you eliminate or remove[2] all the miseries, troubles and tribulations that torment and literally scorch and scald this world[3]. Oh Maheshawri (i.e., the divine consort of Lord Maheshwar, Shiva)! At this time, you should not annihilate the creation and its creatures[4] (because you are their mother and protector, and not their tormentor and destroyer) (20).

[1]ईश्वरसंश्रयात्, [2]न्हरसी, [3]संसारतापान, [4]नेदानीं भूतसंहारस्त्वया

रावणो सगणं हत्वा जगतां सुखमाहितम् ।
किं पुनर्नृत्यकलया जगत्संहियते त्वया ।।२१।।

By killing Ravana along with his subordinates and kith and kin[1], you have bestowed happiness and joy to the world[2]. Now, why do you act to the contrary? Why do you dance[3] madly in anger with a wish to annihilate the world[4]? [That is, on the one hand you have killed the evil fellows because they were tormenting the world and were hazardous for the creation, and now why do you wish to destroy that creation, which you have protected from the torments of the demons, yourself?]' (21)

[1]रावणो सगणं, [2]सुखमाहितम्, [3]किं पुनर्नृत्यलया, [4]जगत्संहियते

एतच्छुत्वाविशालाक्षी ब्रह्मणोऽभ्यर्थनं वच: ।
प्रीता सीता तदा प्राह ब्रह्माणं सहदैवतम् ।।२२।।

When she (Sita), who had large beautiful eyes[1], heard this prayer[2] offered by Brahma, she felt very pleased[3]. She told Brahma and other Gods — (22).

[1]विशालाक्षी, [2]ऽभ्यर्थनं, [3]प्रीता

पतिर्मे पुण्डरीकाक्ष: पुष्पकोपरि राघव: ।
विद्ध: क्षुरप्रेण हृदि शेते मृतकवत्प्रभु: ।।२३।।
तस्मिन्नैव स्थिते देवा: किमिच्छामि जगद्धितम् ।
ग्रासमेकं करिष्यामि जगदेतच्चराचरम् ।।२४।।

'My husband, the lotus eyed Raghav (Sri Ram)[1], is lying on the Pushpak chariot-cum-plane wounded in his heart and unconscious[2].

He has been hit and wounded with a sharp arrow (shot by Ravana)[3] (23). Oh Gods! With him lying in such a precarious condition (on the verge of death)[4], how can I be expected to think of the welfare and happiness of the rest of the world (when my own Lord is in such a miserable, pitiable and precarious condition)[5]? I shall devour this whole creation, both the animate as well as the inanimate creatures, in one mouthful (or as one morsel of food). I will not spare this creation now'[6] (24). [23-24]

[1]पुण्डरीकाक्षः राघवः, [2]विद्धः हृदि, [3]क्षुरप्रेण शेते, [4]मृतकवत्प्रभुः, [5]तस्मिन्नैव स्थिते देवाः किमिच्छामि जगद्धितम्, [6]ग्रासमेकं करिष्यामि जगदेतच्चराचरम्

श्रुत्वैतद्वचनं देव्याः संरम्भसहितं सुराः ।
हाहाकारं प्रचक्रुस्ते सञ्चचाल च मेदिनी ।।२५।।

Brahma, the creator, accompanied by all other Gods, touched[1] Sri Ram who was lying unconscious on the Pushpak chariot with their hands[2] and made him regain his consciousness and recover his memory[3] (25).

[1]संरम्भसहित, [2]हाहाकारं, [3]सञ्चचाल च मेदिनी

ततो ब्रह्मा सुरैः सार्द्धं पुष्पकं रथमास्थितम् ।
श्रीरामं ग्राहयामास स्मृतिं स्पृष्ट्वा स्वपाणिना ।।२६।।

Brahma, the creator, in the presence of all other Gods, touched[1] Sri Ram, who was lying unconscious on the Pushpak chariot, with his hands[2] and made him regain consciousness and recover his lost memory[3] (26).

[1]स्पृष्ट्वा, [2]स्वपाणिना, [3]ग्राहयामास स्मृति

उत्तस्थौ च महाबाहू रामः कमललोचनः ।
रे रावण सुदुष्टत्वमद्य मद्बाणभेदितः ।।२७।।
द्रक्ष्यस्याशु यमस्यास्यं भ्रुकुटीभीषणाकृतिः ।
ब्रुवन्नैवं धनुर्गृह्य ह्यपश्यन्त्रिदशान्पुरः ।।२८।।

Immediately, the most brave, strong, powerful and potent[1] lotus-eyed[2] Sri Ram sat up. He called out, 'Oh you wicked Ravana[3]! You shall be now pierced by my arrows today[4] (27), and sure enough, you shall see the horrifying face of Yam (the God of death)[5] who has a most awe inspiring and terrifyingly crooked eyebrow[6] (i.e., now you will face death and will see Yam standing in front of you when I shoot my arrow at you. The appearance of Yam with his fearful

demeanours and horrifying countenance and scowling face would instill fear in your heart and make you tremble in terror and regret your fighting with me)'. Having uttered these defiant words, when Sri Ram raised the bow once again to shoot at Ravana, he saw the Gods standing in front of him instead of his enemy (28). [27-28]

[1]महाबाहू, [2]रामः कमललोचनः, [3]रावण सुदुष्टत्वमद्य, [4]मद्बाणभेदितः, [5]यमस्यास्यं, [6]भ्रुकुटीभीषणाकृतिः

नापश्यज्जानकीं तत्र प्राणेभ्योपि गरीयसीम् ।
नृत्यतीं चापरां कालीमपश्यच्च रणाङ्गणे ।।२९।।
चतुर्भुजां चलज्जिह्वां खड्गखर्परधारिणीम् ।
शवरूपमहादेवहृत्संस्थां च दिगम्बराम् ।।३०।।

He also did not see Janki (Sita) who was more dear to him than his own life (literally, his own Pran)[1]. Instead of her, he saw 'Mahakali' (literally, the great black complexioned Goddess of death and destruction) dancing frantically and madly in the battlefield[2] (29). She had 4 arms[3], her tongue was protruding and lapping violently[4], she held a fierce sword and a hollowed out skull in her hands[5], was naked[6], and was standing on the chest of Lord Mahadev lying on the ground like a corpse[7]. (See also verse no. 69 of canto 23). (30)[29-30]

[1]प्राणेभ्योपि गरीयसीम्, [2]नृत्यतीं रणाङ्गणे, [3]चतुर्भुजां, [4]चलज्जिह्वां, [5]खड्गखर्परधारिणीम्, [6]दिगम्बराम्, [7]शवरूपमहादेवहृत्संस्थां

पिबन्ती रुधिरं भीमां कोटराक्षीं क्षुधातुराम् ।
जगद्ग्रासो कृतोत्साहां मुण्डमालाविभूषणम् ।।३१।।

He (Sri Ram) found that she (Mahakali) was drinking blood[1], was colossus and awe inspiring in form[2], had hollow and ghostly eyes (like those of a skeleton)[3], and appeared to be very hungry[4] and eager to satisfy her hunger[5] by devouring the whole world[6]. She was adorned by a garland of skulls and severed heads[7] (31).

[1]पिबन्ती रुधिरं, [2]भीमां, [3]कोटराक्षीं, [4]क्षुधातुराम्, [5]कृतोत्साहां, [6]जगद्ग्रासो, [7]मुण्डमालाविभूषणम्

भीमाकाराभिरन्याभिः क्रीडन्तीं रणमूर्द्धनि ।
मुण्डै राक्षसराजस्य खेलन्तीं कन्दुकं मुदा ।।३२।।

She was playing in the battlefield[1] along with her other colossus and most horrifying and terrorising companions who were like her[2]. They joyously and cheerfully[3] played[4] the game of ball[5] with the severed heads[6] of the demon king (Ravana)[7] (32).

[1]क्रीडन्तीं रणमूर्द्धनि, [2]भीमाकाराभिरन्याभिः, [3]मुदा, [4]खेलन्तीं, [5]कन्दुकं, [6]मुण्डै, [7]राक्षसराजस्य

[Note :- Ravana had a thousand heads. Therefore, there was no shortage of balls to play with in the battlefield.]

प्रलयध्वान्तधराभां सदा घर्घरनादिनीम् ।
अन्त्रमुण्डकरोट्यक्षकृतमालां चलत्मपदाम् ।।३३।।
कबन्धान्राक्षसानां च तया सह विनृत्यतः ।
रथवाजिगजानां च शकलानि व्यलोकयत् ।।३४।।

Creating a constant whirring, hissing, rustling and wheezing sound[1] heard during the night that appears at the time of doomsday[2], wearing garlands made of intestines, skulls and severed heads and hands as well as the gouged out eyes[3] of the warriors lying dead on the battlefield, kicking and stomping around violently and viciously[4] (33), dancing with Kabandhs (torsos from which heads had been severed) of dead demons[5], Mahakali roamed around the battlefield looking at the shattered remnants of war chariots, dead horses and fallen elephants[6] (34). [33-34]

[1]सदा घर्घरनादिनीम्, [2]प्रलयध्वान्तधराभां, [3]अन्त्रमुण्डकरोट्यक्षकृतमालां, [4]चलत्मपदाम्, [5]कबन्धान्राक्षसानां विनृत्यतः [6]रथवाजिगजानां च शकलानि

नैकोपि राक्षसो यत्र करपादशिरोयुतः ।
कबन्धा ये च नृत्यन्ति तेषां पादाः प्रतिष्ठिताः ।।३५।।

There was not single demon torso that had hands, legs or head left on it. Only those torsos that were dancing had legs to enable them to dance (35).

कबन्धं रावणस्यापि नृत्यन्तं च व्यलोकयत् ।
तद्दृष्ट्वा सुमहाघोरं प्रेतराजपुरोपमम् ।।३६।।

He (Sri Ram) saw even the torso of Ravana dancing frantically (without the heads). The scenario appeared to resemble the most ghoulish, horrifying, bone chilling and hair raising[1] sights observed in the capital city of the king of ghosts, phantoms, spirits and ogres[2] (36).

[1]सुमहाघोरं, [2]प्रेतराजपुरोपमम्

कालीं च वीक्ष्य नृत्यन्तीं मातृभिः सहितां द्विज ।
पपात हस्ताद्रामस्य वेपताः सशरं धनुः ।।३७।।

Oh Brahmin (i.e., sage Bharadwaj)! Watching Kali (the black Goddess of death)[1] dancing in a mad trance-like state[2] along with other female ghosts, vampires, ogres, phantoms and spirits of war[3] in the battlefield, the bow and the arrow fell down[4] on the ground from the shaking and trembling hands of the wonderstruck and apperently terrified Sri Ram[5] (37).

[1]कालीं, [2]नृत्यन्तीं, [3]मातृभिः सहितां, [4]पपात सशरं धनुः, [5]हस्ताद्रामस्य वेपताः

भयाच्च निमिमीलाशुः रामः पद्मविलोचने ।
इत्येवं विस्मितं दृष्ट्वा ब्रह्मोवाच रघूत्तमम् ।।३८।।

Petrified with fear[1], Sri Ram shut tight[2] his lotus-like eyes[3]. Seeing the most exalted Raghav, Sri Ram[4], full of consternation and perplexity, dazed and awestricken[5], the creator Brahma averred reassuringly to him — (38).

[1]भयाच्च, [2]निमिमीलाशुः, [3]पद्मविलोचने, [4]रघूत्तमम्, [5]विस्मितं

त्वां दृष्ट्वा विह्वलं सीता क्रुद्धं चापि च रावणम् ।
रथादवस्कन्द्यसती पपात रणमूर्द्धनि ।।३९।।
भीमां च मूर्तिमालम्ब्य रोमकूपाश्च मातृकाः ।
निर्माय ताभिः सहिता हत्वा रावणमग्रतः ।।४०।।

'Observing that you are tormented and distressed beyond measure[1] (when you were lying wounded and unconscious on the chariot at being shot by Ravana's arrow, as described in Canto 23, verse nos. 8-13) and that Ravana was becoming vehemently ferocious, belligerent, most unpredictable in his behaviour and exceedingly angry and wrathful[2], Sita had immediately jumped down from the chariot[3] on to the battlefield[4]. She then assumed this most terrifying, horrifying, colossus and formidable form[5], produced all these female ogres, ghosts, phantoms and other female spirits[6] from her own body hairs[7], and playing sport with them[8], she playfully, without even the least effort on her part, slayed the demon Ravana[9] (39-40).

[1]त्वां विह्वलं, [2]क्रुद्धं रावणम्, [3]रथादवस्कन्द्यसती पपात, [4]रणमूर्द्धनि, [5]भीमां च मूति, [6]मातृकाः, [7]रोमकूपाश्च, [8]निर्माय ताभिः सहिता, [9]हत्वा रावणमग्रतः

रक्षसां निधनं कृत्वा नृत्यन्तीयं व्यवस्थिता ।
अनया सहितो राम सृजस्यवसि हंसि च ।।४१।।

Having slayed all the demons[1], she has now recovered herself sufficient enough to dance (in order to celebrate the occasion)[2].

Oh Sri Ram! In association with her, you produce and create[3], and at the appropriate time, you destroy this creation[4] (41).

[1]रक्षसां निधनं, [2]नृत्यन्तीयं व्यवस्थिता, [3]सृजस्यवसि, [4]हंसि

नानया रहितो राम किञ्चित्कर्तुमपि क्षमः ।
इति बोधयितुं सीता चकार तद निन्दिता ।।४२।।

Oh Sri Ram! You cannot accomplish anything[1] successfully without her help and association, or without involving her in your endeavours[2]. It is just to prove the point to you and highlight this irrefutable truth and fact[3] that she has done all this[4] (42).

[1]किञ्चित्कर्तुमपि क्षमः, [2]नानया रहितो, [3]इति बोधयितुं, [4]सीता चकार तद निन्दिता

[Note :- From the point of view of Vedanta, Sri Ram represents the Viraat Purush and Brahm, the supreme Being, while Sita is a manifestation of Prakriti or Mother Nature. Brahm does not do anything himself; he has delegated this 'doing' part to his Shakti which is his own cosmic energy and vitality revealed in the form of Prakriti. To take an example from ordinary life, a king is the sovereign, but everything, every deed, every work of the kingdom is done by his chief ministers. It is done in his name, and for all practical purposes the king is responsible for all the actions taken by his administration represented by his ministers. But as is evident, the actual action are taken not by the king but by his ministers, and it often turns out that the chief ministers wield more power than the king himself. Also, it is often seen that the king not knows himself what is where in his kingdom. The latter virtually depends on his ministers.]

पश्यैतां जानकीं राम त्यज भीतिं महाभुज ।
निर्गुणां सगुणां साक्षात्सदसद्व्यक्तिवर्जिताम् ।।४३।।

Oh Sri Ram who has most strong and valiant arms[1]! Abandon your despondency, consternation, perplexities, doubts and fears[2] and have a look at Janki (Sita)[3]. She embodies in her divine self the virtues of 'Nirguna'[4] as well as 'Sagun'[5] (i.e., she has a subtle, invisible form having no attributes but incorporating the stupendous powers or Shakti of Nature which controls the working of the entire cosmos, as well as a gross, visible form having attributes as is evident in a colossus and fearful form as Mahakali, the great black Goddess

of death, respectively). She is free from the notions of being either truthful or false[6] (i.e., it is futile to debate whether the myriad manifestations of the divine cosmic energy are true or are simply an illusion created by delusions and ignorance, because she is beyond comprehension and cannot be subjected to any stereo type)' (43).

[1]राम महाभुज, [2]त्यज भीतिं, [3]पश्यैतां जानकीं, [4]निर्गुणां, [5]सगुणां, [6]साक्षात्सदसद्व्यक्तिवर्जिताम्

इत्येद्द्रुहिणवचो निशम्य रामः
श्रुतिमुखमात्महितं पराभिमर्दि ।
शुचमनुविजहौ विचार्य किञ्चिज्जनक
सुतामनुपश्यति स्म पश्चात् ।।४४।।

Hearing these words of wise council from Brahma, which were pleasing and reassuring for the ears[1] of Sri Ram, which were endearing and uplifting for his Atma[2] (or his heart), and which allayed all his fears arising out of his enemy[3], Sri Ram forsook fears, doubts, confusions and consternations[4] of all kinds. Then on being reassured that the horrendous and most terrifying figure which he beheld in front of him in the battlefield and which had sent shivers down his spine, cuddling his blood and almost paralysing him into numbness, was no body else other than his own dear wife, Sri Ram looked again at the daughter of Janak (Sita)[5] (44).

[1]श्रुति, [2]मुखमात्महितं, [3]पराभिमर्दि, [4]शुचमनुविजहौ, [5]जनक सुतामनुपश्यति

Thus ends Canto 24 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing Sri Ram's revival, his terror at seeing Sita in a ferocious, all annihilating, angry and formidable form as Mahakali, and Brahma enlightening him about the developments while he was lying unconscious, thereby reassuring Sri Ram and removing the fear of Mahakali from his heart.

——*—*

Canto 25

Sri Ram offers prayers and his obeisance to the great Goddess Mahakali by using 1008 names as divine epithets or adjectives to honour and praise her

This is the largest and the most significant Canto of this version of the epic story of Ramayan. When Sri Ram was assured by Brahma that the ferocious form that he beheld in his front was none other than his own wife Sita, Sri Ram felt a little comfortable. He slowly opened his eyes, bowed before the Goddess and then asked her who she was (verse no. 1-4). She introduced herself as the divine, supreme, transcendental, eternal, infinite and splendorous cosmic energy with matchless and stupendous strength, powers and potentials. She was the sublime and supreme Authority in creation (verse nos. 5-7). Then Sri Ram saw her 'Viraat', i.e., a huge, macrocosmic, all-encompassing, colossus and transcendental from as the great cosmic entity (verse nos. 8-15). Awed and dumb struck, he prayed to the cosmic Goddess, brimming over with devotion for her divine Being, by using various epithets as her different names which took the form of 'Stotras' or hymns offered to a deity in its praise and honour as a token of paying obeisance and honour to it as well as to adore and worship it. These Stotras present a spectacular canvas of metaphysical and spiritual concepts at one place. They are soaked in spiritualism and imbued with metaphysics. These consisted of 1008 Names; this figure of 1008 is an auspicious number. Each of these names describes one or the other glorious virtues and characteristics of the great Goddess (verse nos. 17-152). Finally, sage Valmiki tells his disciple Bharadwaj the benefits or rewards of reading, hearing and preaching these divine names, or invoking the grace of the great Goddess with the help of this Stotra (verse nos. 153-159).

It should be noticed here that this version of Ramayan, called Adbhut Ramayan, has laid great emphasis on the greatness and divinity of Sita as the cosmic, transcendental, sublime and supreme Authority that enables righteousness to prevail over unrighteousness.

It glorifies the 'Shakti' aspect of divinity that has enabled Brahm, the supreme entity here manifested as Sri Ram who had created this Shakti in the first place, to do what he wishes to do. Without that Shakti, Brahm is virtually disabled.

Another point is that sage Veda Vyas, the other ancient scholarly sage who has classified the Vedas and written the Purans, has also highlighted the important role that 'Shakti' plays in the slaying of the 10-headed Ravana by describing how Goddess Durga, the Goddess who rides a lion, had been instrumental in Sri Ram's success in killing the 10-headed demon king of Lanka. An English version of that version of Ramayan as has been narrated by Veda Vyas in Devi Puran has been published separately by this author. But this Adbhut Ramayan is the most magnificent version of all the Ramayans available in as much as that it presents the ordinary reader as well as the worshippers of the Goddess as Shakti with this beautiful sequences of verses called 'Stotra' as contained in this Canto, which is as much a piece of excellent Sanskrit literature as it is an exposition of Vedanta and metaphysics.

Another pertinent point is that Canto nos. 23, 25 and 26 radically alters the generally held notions of a woman in India — shy, docile, submissive, gentle, debonair, humble, subject to male domination, yielding, always at the receiving end of sorrows, miseries and torments, and subject to male chauvinism. It depicts a valiant, a courageous, a dare devil, a bold, a go-getting, a strong-willed and majestic womanhood that outshines the male in this world. It glorifies women and her potentials and raises her to a high pedestal of strength and valour quiet removed from a cowering, weeping and shrunk lady-in-distress picture that a woman is depicted as in tradition-bound ancient India.

ब्रह्मणो वचनं श्रुत्वा रामः कमललोचनः ।
प्रोन्मील्य शनकैरक्षि वेपमानो महाभुजः ।।१।।
प्रणम्य शिरसा भूमौ तेजसा चापि विह्वलः ।
भीतः कृताञ्जलिपुटः प्रोवाच परमेश्वरीम् ।।२।।

Hearing the words of Brahma, the creator, the brave, valiant and

strong[1] lotus-eyed[2] Sri Ram slowly opened his eyes. Shaking out of shock and fear[3] (1), he reverentially bowed before her (Goddess Mahakali) by touching his head to the ground[4]. He was petrified and awestruck by her 'Tej' (i.e., by her raging and burning anger, her ruthlessness, her relentless and uncompromising demeanours, her merciless stance and her ferocious countenance as well as the splendour, radiance and energy that was effusing from her body)[5]. He joined his hands[6] like a scared and cowering person[7] and addressed the supreme Goddess called Parmeshwari[8] (2). [1-2]

[1]रामः महाभुजः, [2]कमललोचनः, [3]शनकैरक्षि वेपमानो, [4]प्रणम्य शिरसा भूमौ, [5]तेजसा चापि विह्वलः, [6]कृताञ्जलिपुटः, [7]भीतः, [8]परमेश्वरीम्

का त्वं देवि विशालाक्षि शशांका वयवांकिते ।
न जाने त्वां महादेवी यथावद्ब्रूहि पृच्छते ।।३।।

'You bear the mark or sign of a crescent moon (on your forehead)[1] and have large, broad and beautiful eyes[2]. Who are you? Oh great Goddess! We do not know about you[3]. Hence, we request you to tell us about your truthful self[4]' (3).

[1]शशांका वयवांकिते, [2]विशालाक्षि, [3]न जाने त्वां, [4]यथावद्ब्रूहि पृच्छते

रामस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा ततः सा परमेश्वरी ।
व्याजहार रघुव्याघ्रं योगिनामभयप्रदा ।।४।।

Hearing these words of Sri Ram spoken reverentially in humility, that supreme Goddess[1], who gives protection and bestows fearlessness to ascetics (Yogis)[2], replied to the lion of king Raghu's clan (i.e., Sri Ram)[3] —(4).

[1]परमेश्वरी, [2]योगिनामभयप्रदा, [3]रघुव्याघ्रं

मां विद्धि परमां शक्ति महेश्वरसमाश्रयाम् ।
अनन्यामव्ययामेकां यां पश्यन्ति मुमुक्षवः ।।५।।

'Treat me as, and be sure and convinced that, I am that stupendous, supreme, transcendental, sublime 'Shakti' (energy, powers, potentials, potent, prowess, majesty, glory, authority, strength and vitality)[1] who (which) is under the command and authority of Lord Maheshwar (literally, the great God or Ishwar; here referring to Lord Shiva, and as a logical corollary, this Goddess, representing the vigorous, robust and irrepressible cosmic energy and powers, is Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva)[2]. I am endless, infinite,

measureless and without any parameters and boundaries or limitations[3], and am imperishable and the one who is not subjected to decay, destruction and ruin[4] —this is the subtle form of mine that is viewed and aimed at by those who are the seekers aspiring for 'Moksha' (i.e., emancipation and deliverance from this horrifying, artificial, entrapping mundane world)[5] (5).

[1]परमां शक्ति, [2]महेश्वरसमाश्रयाम्, [3]अनन्या, [4]मव्ययामेकां, [5]यां पश्यन्ति मुमुक्षवः

अहं वै सर्वभावनामात्मा सर्वान्तरा शिवा ।
शाश्वती सर्वविज्ञाना सर्वमूर्तिप्रवर्तिका ।।६।।

I am at the core of all 'Bhavnas' or sentiments and emotions, all wishes, fancies, motives, desires and ideas[1]. [That is, it is me who ignites these emotions and drive them in a creature.] I reside in the heart or the bosom or the inner-self of all[2] as 'Shivaa' (i.e., the Shakti aspect of Lord Shiva)[3]. [That is, I am that divine spark of life, the vitality and vigour that acts like a powerhouse that keeps the body and mind of a creature functioning properly in a righteous manner.] I am universal, eternal, infinite and the most primary aspect of creation[4]. I am an embodiment of all wisdom, knowledge, erudition, sagacity, skills, expertise, scholarship and enlightenment[5], and am the one who produces, inspires, activates, impels and judges all the gross creation known as this world[6] (6).

[1]सर्वभावनामात्मा, [2]सर्वान्तरा, [3]शिवा, [4]शाश्वती, [5]सर्वविज्ञाना, [6]सर्वमूर्तिप्रवर्तिका

अनन्तानन्तमहिमा संसारार्णवतारिणी ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे पदमैश्वरम् ।।७।।

I am eternal and without an end[1]. My glories, authority, majesty and potentials have no limits[2]. I am the supreme Authority who can take one across the ocean represented by this world (i.e., I can provide him liberation from his tormenting shackles and provide deliverance to his soul)[3]. I am bestowing you with divine and sublime eyesight, i.e., I am giving you deep, penetrating and supernatural insight into the realm of the transcendental[4] so that you can have a view of the magnificence and majesty of my glorious state[5]' (7).

[1]अनन्ता, [2]ऽनन्तमहिमा, [3]संसारार्णवतारिणी, [4]दिव्यं चक्षुः, [5]मे पदमैश्वरम्

इत्युक्त्वा विररामैषा रामोऽपश्यच्च तत्पदम् ।
कोटिसूर्यप्रतीकाशं विश्वक्तेजोनिराकुलम् ।।८।।

After this, she fell silent. Sri Ram received the glorious insight provided by the Goddess and had the divine eyesight that enabled him to observe her glorious and majestic stature and form[1] which was dazzling with the splendorous light that surrounded her from all the sides[2] in an effervescent and fluorescent radiance like the one that effuses from a million Suns shining together[3] (8).

[1]तत्पदम्, [2]विश्वक्तेजोनिराकुलम्, [3]कोटिसूर्यप्रतीकाशं

ज्वालावलीसहस्रढ्यं कालानलशतोपमम् ।
दंष्ट्राकरालं दुर्घर्ष जटामण्डलमण्डितम् ।।९।।

Thousands of flaring flames leapt out from her and totally surrounded her from all the sides, and she appeared to be enveloped in a blinding ball of fire. That is, she appeared to be at the core of a brilliant ball of fire displaying blinding splendour and dazzle[1] resembling a Sun. She appeared like the most formidable and terrifying personification of the doomsday Fire-God having sharp and ferocious teeth that protruded out from his mouth[2]. The flames leaping out from her body had the intensity, potent and ferocity of hundreds of doomsday fires appearing at once[3]. She looked most formidable, awe inspiring, horrifying and terrifying[4]. She was adorned by a crown of a matted plait of tresses on her glorious head[5] (9).

[1]ज्वालावलीसहस्रढ्यं, [2]दंष्ट्राकरालं, [3]कालानलशतोपमम्, [4]दुर्घर्ष, [5]जटामण्डलमण्डितम्

त्रिशूलवरहस्तं व घोररूपं भयावहम् ।
प्रशाम्यत्सौम्यवदनमनन्तैश्वर्यसंयुतम् ।।१०।।

Holding a trident in her hands[1], her form looked most horrifying and formidable to behold[2], and it invoked terror[3] in the mind of the beholder. But, at the same time, it was calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil[4], most pleasant and gentle to look at[5], and was endowed with great and infinite glory, majesty and magnificence[6]* (10).

[1]त्रिशूलवरहस्तं, [2]घोररूपं, [3]भयावहम्, [4]प्रशाम्य, [5]त्सौम्यवदन, [6] मनन्तैश्वर्यसंयुतम्

[Note :- *It obviously appears to be contradictory on the face of it, but it isn't when one ponders on its subtle meaning. For those who are evil, sinful, pervert and wicked, the Goddess appears to be terrifying and fearful, while for those who are righteous, good, gentle and humble, she appears to be like a doting and lovable mother.]

चन्द्रावयवलक्ष्माढ्यं चन्द्रकोटिसमप्रभम् ।
किरीटिनं गदाहस्तं नूपुरैरुपशोभितम् ।।११।।

She had the divine marks of a crescent moon (on her forehead)[1] and possessed the magnificence and glories of Laxmi[2]. [That is, she had Lord Shiva as her adornment or was fortunate to have Shiva as her Lord, as represented by the crescent moon on her forehead, because this moon is a typical symbol of Lord Shiva being borne by him on his forehead. At the same time, she had the opulence and majesty that is associated with Goddess Laxmi who is the patron Goddess of wealth, prosperity and material well-being.] She resembled thousands of moons in her bright radiance[3]. She wore a divine crown and a tiara[4], held a mace in her hands[5], and anklets adorned her features[6] (11).

[1]चन्द्रावयव, [2]लक्ष्माढ्यं, [3]चन्द्रकोटिसमप्रभम्, [4]किरीटिनं, [5]गदाहस्तं, [6]नूपुरैरुपशोभितम्

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्गन्धानुलेपनम् ।
शङ्खचक्रकरं काम्यं त्रिनेत्रं कृत्तिवाससम् ।।१२।।

She was wearing charming and magnificent garlands and clothes[1], had her body smeared by fragrant perfumes[2], held a conch and a chakra (a discus) in her hands[3], had three eyes (two normal eyes and the third subtle eye symbolising wisdom and deep insight located between the eyebrows)[4], and she was wrapped in the hide of an animal (generally, a dear or lion skin used as a shawl or an overcoat to cover the body)[5]. She presented a very attractive and enchanting form[6] (12).

[1]दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं, [2]दिव्गन्धानुलेपनम्, [3]शङ्खचक्रकरं, [4]त्रिनेत्रं, [5]कृत्तिवाससम्, [6]काम्यं

अन्त:रथं चाण्डबाह्यस्थं बाह्यरभ्यन्तरत:परम् ।
सर्वशक्तिमयं शान्तं सर्वाकारं सनातनम् ।।१३।।

She is present inside[1] as well as outside the cosmos/universe[2] and is even beyond these locations (i.e., she is omnipresent, immanent, all-pervading, all-permeating and all-encompassing in this creation)[3]. Her form was almighty[4] but calm and peaceful[5]. It was so magical that all possible forms that exist in this creation could be simultaneously seen in her single, individual form[6] which is eternal, most ancient and universal[7] (13).

[1]अन्त:रथं, [2]चाण्डबाह्यस्थं, [3]बाह्यरभ्यन्तरत:परम्, [4]सर्वशक्तिमयं, [5]शान्तं, [6]सर्वाकारं, [7]सनातनम्

ब्रह्मेन्द्रोपेन्द्रयोगीन्द्रैरीड्यमानपदाम्बुजम् ।
सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतेक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।।१४।।
सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठन्तं ददर्श पदमैश्वरम् ।१४½।

Her lotus-like feet[1] were being worshipped and honoured by[2] Brahma, Indra, Upendra (a deputy to Indra, the king of Gods) and Yogendra (those who are senior Yogis or ascetic and hermits). It was fantastic that wherever Sri Ram looked at her, all parts of her divine and majestic body appeared to have feet[3] and a head with eyes and mouth[4]. [That is, wherever Sri Ram glanced at her colossus and vast form, he could see a small figure of the Goddess complete with a leg, a head and eyes. It was a most magical and out of the world experience for Sri Ram.] Her stupendous and magical form encompassed everything from all sides[5]. Sri Ram had a holy sight of her divine, sublime, transcendental and supreme state of her existence[6] that was equivalent to having a divine vision of the supreme Lord (i.e., Lord Shiva or Brahm) of this creation[7] (14-14½).

[1]पदाम्बुजम्, [2]रीड्यमान, [3]पाणिपादं, [4]क्षिशिरोमुखम्, [5]सर्वमावृत्य, [6]तिष्ठन्तं, [7]ददर्श पदमैश्वरम्

दृष्ट्वा च तादृशं रूपं दिव्यं माहेश्वरमं पदम् ।।१५।।
तथैव च समाविष्टः स रामौ हृतमानसः ।
आत्मन्याधाय चात्मानमोऽकारं समनुस्मरन् ।।१६।।

Observing this divine, sublime, subtle, transcendental and supreme state of 'Maheshwar' (literally, the great God; here referring to Shiva)[1] (15), Sri Ram's heart was exhilarated and he was thrilled[2]. He felt very glad and was overwhelmed by this sight which entered his heart and established itself firmly there (i.e., now Sri Ram felt a surge of devotion, reverence and affection for the divine Goddess whom he had feared and was terrified of a few moments ago)[3]. Experiencing oneness of his own Atma/soul with that divine Atma of the cosmos (as represented by the Viraat form of the Goddess)[4], he contemplated a while upon 'Omkar' or OM (which is a divine word representing the non-dual, sublime, transcendental, eclectic and supreme Brahm)[5] in his heart. He invoked it reverentially and remembered the divine Brahm in her form[6] (16). [15-16]

[1]दिव्यं माहेश्वरमं पदम्, [2]रामौ हृतमानसः, [3]समाविष्टः, [4]आत्मन्याधाय, [5]चात्मानमोऽकारं, [6]समनुस्मरन्

नाम्नामष्टसहस्रेण तुष्टाव परमेश्वरीम् ।
ॐ सीतोमा परमा शक्तिरनंता निष्कलामला ।।१७।।

He used 1008 Names[1] to praise, honour, worship, adore and pay tributes and his obeisance to the glories, majesty, magnificence, virtues, qualities and powers of the great and supreme Goddess[2] in order to please her[3].

He prayed as follows— 'OM salutations! Oh Goddess! You have the following divine names by which you are known and honoured. These are epithets that describe your stupendous and magnificent glory, majesty and honour. [1] Sita[1], Uma (the divine consort of Shiva)[3], Parma (the supreme One)[3], Shakti (energy, authority, powers and potentials of Mother Nature)[4], Ananta (eternal, without an end, infinite)[5], Nishkala (pure, pristine, uncorrupt)[6], Amala (one without any faults, blemishes and taints)[7] (17).

[1]सीता, [2]उमा, [3]परमा, [4]शक्ति, [5]ऽनंता, [6]निष्कला, [7]ऽमला

शांता माहेश्वरी नित्या शाश्वती (१०) परमाक्षरा ।
अचिन्त्या केवलानंता शिवात्मा परमात्मिका ।।१८।।

Shanta (peaceful and calm)[1], [10] Maheshwari (the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is called Maheshwar, the great God)[2], Nitya (eternal, always present and universal)[3], Shaswati (universal, infinite)[4], Paramakshara (eternally imperishable as well as a personification of the supreme word called Pranav representing Brahm)[5], Achintya (who is beyond thought and comprehension)[6], Kevala (the only one of her kind)[7], Ananta (endless, infinite, without an end)[8], Shivatma (the soul or spirit or essence of Lord Shiva who represents beauty, auspiciousness, welfare, enlightenment, dispassion, detachment, bliss, peace and calm aspects of creation)[9], Parmatmika (the supreme soul)[10] (18).

[1]शांता, [2]माहेश्वरी, [3]नित्या, [4]शाश्वती, [5]परमाक्षरा, [6]अचिन्त्या, [7]केवल, [8]ऽनंता, [9]शिवात्मा, [10]परमात्मिका

अनादिरव्यया शुद्धा देवात्मा (२०) सर्वगोचरा ।
एकानेकविभागस्था मायातीता सुनिर्मला ।।१९।।

Anaadi (without a beginning)[1], Avyaya (without decay and getting diminished, not perishable)[2], Shuddha (pure, uncorrupt, undiluted, immaculate and pristine)[3], [20] Devatma (the transcendental divine

Soul)[4], Sarvagochara (sees and perceives everything)[5], Ek (one)[6], Anek (more than one, multifarious, myriad, various—i.e., the Goddess is one and indivisible, but at the same time she is present in all the myriad divisions and variations into which this whole creation is divided and classified into)[7], Mayateet (i.e., are beyond Maya or delusions, illusions and ignorance)[8], and Sunirmala (very pure, immaculate, pristine and uncorrupt)[9] (19).

[1]अनादि, [2]ऽव्यया, [3]शुद्धा, [4]देवात्मा, [5]सर्वगोचरा, [6]एका, [7]ऽनेकविभागस्था, [8]मायातीता, [9]सुनिर्मला

महामाहेश्वरी शक्ता महादेवी निरञ्जना ।
काष्ठा (३०) सर्वान्तरस्था च चिच्छक्तिरतिलालसा ।।२०।।

Maha Maheswari (the great Goddess of all the Gods)[1], Shakta (strict, diligent, stringent, rigid, stern, unrelenting, uncompromising)[2], Mahadevi (the great Goddess)[3], Niranjan (pure, holy, invisible, faultless and without blemishes)[4], [30] Kastha (supreme, exalted, outer limit, parameter or boundary of anything, most high)[5], Sarvaant-rastha (present in the bosom or heart of all)[6], Chhichha Shakti (the power of desires originating in the mind)[7], Rati Laalsaa (to have infatuating greed, yearning, aspirations, desires, rapacity etc.)[8] (20).

[1]महामाहेश्वरी, [2]शक्ता, [3]महादेवी, [4]निरञ्जना, [5]काष्ठा, [6]सर्वान्तरस्था, [7]चिच्छक्ति, [8]रतिलालसा

जानकी मिथिलानन्दा राक्षसान्तविधायिनी ।
रावणान्तरकरी रम्या रामवक्षःस्थलालया ।।२१।।

Janki (the daughter of Janak)[1], who gives happiness to the citizens of Mithila (her birth place, also called Janakpur)[2], who is the annihilator or destroyer of demons (representing the evil and wicked forces of the world)[3], who has brought an end of Ravana[4] (the king of demons), who is most sweet and pleasant[5], and who resides in the heart of Sri Ram because she is very dear to him[6] (21).

[1]जानकी, [2]मिथिलानन्दा, [3]राक्षसान्तविधायिनी, [4]रावणान्तरकरी, [4]रम्या, [6]रामवक्षःस्थलालया

उमा सर्वात्मिका (४०) विद्या ज्योतिरूपाऽयुताक्षरो ।
शान्ति प्रतिष्ठा सर्वेषां निवृत्तिरमृपदा ।।२२।।

Uma (another name of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva)[1], [40] Sarwatmika (i.e., the one who resides as the Atma or soul of all)[2], Vidya (knowledge, learning, erudition, sagacity, skill and expertise)[3], Jyoti (a personification of light)[4], Ayutakshari* (to be equivalent to 10,000 divine words OM; to be 10,000 time more imperishable than those entities that are by themselves imperishable)[5], Shanti (peaceful, calm, tranquil and serene)[6], Pratishtha (the foundation upon which everything rests, finds succour and sustenance; the word also means dignity, honour, fame and majesty)[7], Sarvesham (supreme, all in all)[8], Nivriti (liberation, freedom, deliverance)[9], the one who can give Amrit (the ambrosia of eternity and bliss)[10] (22).

[1]उमा, [2]सर्वात्मिका, [3]विद्या, [4]ज्योतिरूपा, [5]ऽयुताक्षरो, [6]शान्ति, [7]प्रतिष्ठा, [8]सर्वेषां, [9]निवृत्ति, [10]रमृपदा

[Note :- *The word Ayut 'ऽयुत' means 10000, and Akshar 'अक्षर' means that which is imperishable as well as the divine word OM.]

व्योममूर्तिर्व्योममयी व्योमधरा (५०) ऽच्युतालता ।
अनादिनिधना योषा कारणात्मा कलाकुला ।।२३।।

You are a personification of Vyom (the vast, fathomless, measureless sky that is pure, uncorrupt, all-pervading, all-encompassing by nature)[1], you pervade the entire sky or Vyom[2] as well as you bear it (space or sky)[3] [50]*. You cannot be degraded, corrupted, tarnished and pulled down from you exalted stature (i.e., you are Achyut)[4]; you are beautiful and tender like a creeper (you are called Lata)[5]; you are without a beginning or end (Anaadi Nidhan)[6]; you are known as Yosha (a chaste woman/lady)[7], Kaaran Atma (the primary cause of anything; the causal body where the Atma or pure consciousness lives)[8], Kalakula (an expert in art and craft of anything, called Kalaa, as well as are an embodiment of brilliance, splendour and grandeur, called Kula)[9] (23).

[1]व्योममूर्ति, [2]र्व्योममयी, [3]व्योमधरा, [4]ऽच्युता, [5]लता, [6]अनादिनिधना, [7]योषा, [8]कारणात्मा, [9]कलाकुला

[Note :- *That is, you are like the sky having all the virtues and characteristic features of it, but at the same time, this element of the sky, which is one of the 5 basic elements of creation, is only a part or fraction of your whole self. See also verse no. 82 and 152.]

नन्दप्रथमजा नाभिरभृतस्यान्तरसंश्रया ।

प्राणेश्वरप्रिया (६०) मातामही महिषवाहना ।।२४।।

You are the one who was born in the household of Nand (during the incarnation of Lord Vishnu as Sri Krishna)[1]; you are like the ambrosia present in the navel of a creature[2*]; [60] you are the beloved one of the Lord who is the Pran of a creature (i.e., you are the dear wife of Lord Sri Ram who is like the soul and life of a creature)[3**], are the grandmother (Matamahi) of the entire creation (much like the creator Brahma who is the grandfather of this creation)[4***]; and you ride a buffalo (hence you are called Mahishvahini)[5] (24).

[1]नन्दप्रथमजा, [2]नाभिरभृतस्यान्तरसंश्रया, [3]प्राणेश्वरप्रिया, [4]मातामही, [5]महिषवाहना

[Note :- *An embryo derives its nutrition from the mother through the placenta attached to its navel. After the child is born, this placenta is incised. So, the location of the navel is regarded as the pitcher of Amrit or ambrosia which gives sustenance to the creature while it is lying unable to do anything itself in the womb of its mother. It is the navel from where the creature derives its nourishment during its nascent phases of development. Further, according to Upanishads dealing with Yoga, this navel is the location of the Sun Chakra from where the body gets its energy. The sun is a metaphor for light and energy that drives this creation. So the Goddess also represents the stupendous powers of the sun.

**Pran is a synonym for life; it is also used for Atma or soul of the creature. Brahm is the supreme Lord who resides as the soul in the heart of the creature. Sri Ram is an incarnation of that Brahm; Sita is the wife of Sri Ram. Hence, this phrase refers to Sita who is the wife of Sri Ram who is the Lord of the creatures and who resides in their hearts as their life infusing Pran. This Pran is a representative of Brahm. Therefore Sri Ram is also a representative of Brahm. And since Brahm uses his divine powers to regulate this creation, from the very beginning of it to the very end, Sita too represents that divine, supreme, subtle and sublime Shakti of Brahm.

***At the macro level, the Goddess Mahakali represents

Mother Nature from whose womb the creation has emerged, and from which mother it derives its sustenance, protection, development and wellbeing. So, if Brahma the creator is the grandfather of creation, Mother Nature is surely the grandmother!]

प्राणेश्वरी प्राणरूपा प्रधानपुरुषेश्वरी ।
सर्वशक्तिः कला काष्ठा ज्योत्स्नेन्दो (७०) र्महिमास्पदा ।।२५।।

You are known as Prarneshwari, the patron Goddess of Pran (the spark of life in a creature)[1]; you are Pranrupa (i.e., a personification of that Pran)[2]; you are Pradhaan (i.e., the chief authority)[3]; you are the Purusheswari (i.e., you are the Goddess of the macrocosmic Viraat Purush; you are the cosmic, macrocosmic, divine and supreme Goddess who is even worshipped and adored by the Supreme Being called Parmeshwar; you are his divine consort)[4]; you are Sarwashakti (all powerful and almighty)[5]; you are an embodiment of Kalaa (i.e., you possess all art, skill and expertise, and you can use these qualities with authority; they are at your command —see also verse no. 23)[6]; you are Kashtha (i.e., you represent the outer limit, parameter or boundary of everything; you are most exalted, supreme and high —see also verse no. 20)[7], [70] you are known as Chandra Jyotsana (i.e., you are brilliant, shining, radiant and glorious like the full moon)[8]; and you are a fount of Mahima (i.e., you possess the virtues of glory, majesty, fame, dignity, all the powers and grandeurs in creation, and these virtues have their origin in you)[9] (25).

[1]प्राणेश्वरी, [2]प्राणरूपा, [3]प्रधान, [4]पुरुषेश्वरी, [4]सर्वशक्तिः, [5]कला, [7]काष्ठा, [8]ज्योत्स्नेन्दो, [9]र्महिमास्पदा

सर्वकार्यनियन्त्री च सर्वभूतेश्वरेश्वरी ।
अनादिरव्यक्तगुणा महानन्दा सनातनी ।।२६।।

You are the controlling authority of all action and deeds[1]; you are the supreme Goddess of all the Bhuts (creatures)[2]; you are eternal and without a beginning (i.e., you are known as Anaadi)[3]; you are invisible, subtle, unmanifest, attributeless and without any definitions[4]; you are an embodiment of great beatitude and felicity[5]; and you are ancient, eternal and universal[6] (26).

[1]सर्वकार्यनियन्त्री, [2]सर्वभूतेश्वरेश्वरी, [3]अनादि, [4]ऽव्यक्तगुणा, [5]महानन्दा, [6]सनातनी

आकाशयोनिर्योगस्था सर्वयोगेश्वरेश्वरी (८०)।
शवासना चितान्तःस्था महेशी वृषवाहना ॥२७॥

Your divine and holy womb in which the whole creation was conceived is as vast, as spotless, as immaculate, as uncorrupt and as subtle as the sky[1*]. You remain in an eternal meditative posture of Yoga (i.e., you are perpetually, constantly and consistently engrossed in deep meditation and are submerged in your pure conscious like an enlightened ascetic)[2]. [80] You are the patron Goddess and the Lord of all great ascetics (Yogis —see also verse no. 90)[3]. You sit on a corpse (in the cremation ground while meditating— see verse no. 145 also)[4]. You contemplate and deeply focus upon the pure self which is pure consciousness[5]. You are a divine consort of Lord Shiva[6], and you sit on a buffalo[7] (27).

[1]आकाशयोनि, [2]निर्योगस्था, [3]सर्वयोगेश्वरेश्वरी, [4]शवासना, [5]चितान्तःस्था, [6]महेशी, [7]वृषवाहना

[Note :- *The sky is the space of the cosmos in which the entire creation exists; it is conceived there, develops there, is sustained and nourished there, and it ends there. The sky is pristine pure in itself and it incorporates everything that exists. Therefore, it is equivalent to the divine womb of Mother Nature.]

बालिकातरुणी वृद्धा वृद्धामाता जरातुरा ।
महामाया (९०) सुदुष्पूरा मूलप्रकृतिरीश्वरी ॥२८॥

You are Baalika (a girl child)[1], a Taruni (a youthful lady)[2], Vriddha (an old woman)[3], Vriddha Mata (an old mother)[4], and Jaratura (beyond old age; old age does not touch you because you always remain youthful)[5]. [90] You are Maha Maya (the great delusionary and cosmic power or Mother Nature and creation)[6], you are Sudushpura (a resident of a far away place, i.e., the heavens)[7], you are Mool Prakriti (the primary Nature)[8], and you are Ishwari (the great Goddess)[9] (28).

[1]बालिका, [2]तरुणी, [3]वृद्धा, [4]वृद्धामाता, [5]जरातुरा, [6]महामाया, [7]सुदुष्पूरा, [8]मूलप्रकृति, [9]ईश्वरी

संसारयोनिःसकला सर्वशक्तिसमुद्भवा ।
संसारसारा दुर्वारा दुर्निरीक्ष्यादुरासदा (१००) ॥२९॥

You are the divine womb in which this world was conceived[1]. You

are an embodiment of everything that there is (i.e., you are called Sakala)[2]. You are almighty and have been born by the conjunction of all the stupendous, magnificent and most marvelous powers and potentials present in creation[3]. You are the essence of the entire world[4]. You are difficult to handle or tackle (i.e., you are beyond the powers of anyone to deal with)[5]. You are visible with the greatest of difficulties[6]. [100] You are unimaginable, beyond meaning and the purview of the senses, and are without an end[7] (29).

[1]संसारयोनिः, [2]सकला, [3]सर्वशक्तिसमुद्भवा, [4]संसारसारा, [5]दुर्वारा, [6]दुर्निरीक्ष्या, [7]दुरासदा

प्राणशक्तिः प्राणविद्यायोगिनीपरमा कला ।
महाविभूतिर्दुर्घर्षा मूलप्रकृतिसम्भवा ॥३०॥

You are the magnificent subtle power and vitality as well as the stupendous force and energy of Pran (the life infusing spark of creation). That is why you are called Pran Shakti[1]. You are expert in the science and knowledge that deals with Pran, called Pran Vidya[2]. You are a Yogini (a female ascetic)[3], a Parma (supreme, transcendental and most exalted female entity)[4], a Kalaa (artful, skillful, brilliant and grand)[5], a great Vibhuti (one who is excellent, glorious, majestic, dignified, prosperous and possesses magnificent virtues and is an asset for the world)[6], a Durgharsha (most formidable, indomitable, difficult, invincible, unrelenting, daunting and insuppressible)[7], and are born from the primary, primordial Nature of creation, called the Mool Prakriti[8] (30).

[1]प्राणशक्तिः, [2]प्राणविद्या, [3]योगिनी, [4]परमा, [5]कला, [6]महाविभूति, [7]दुर्घर्षा, [8]मूलप्रकृति

अनाद्यनन्तविभवा परात्मा पुरुषो बली (११०)।
सर्गस्थित्यन्तकरणी सुदुर्वाच्या दुरत्यया ॥३१॥

You are without a beginning[1] and an end[2] (i.e., you are infinite, measureless and endless); you are majestic, glorious and famous[3]; you are the Supreme Soul of creation called Parmatma[4]; you are Purush (the primary male aspects of creation; the Viraat Purush)[5]; [110] you are known as Bali (most strong, powerful, potent and authoritative)[6]; you are the one who establishes and ends the world[7]; you are the one who cannot be described[8]; you are the one who does not die or decay, and are faultless and without any tarnishes or blemishes[9] (31).

[1]अनाद्य, [2]ऽनन्त, [3]विभवा, [4]परात्मा, [5]पुरुषो, [6]बली, [7]सर्गस्थित्यन्तकरणी, [8]सुदुर्वाच्या, [9]दुरत्यया

शब्दयोनिश्शब्दमयी नादाख्या नादविग्रहा ।
प्रधानपुरुषातीता प्रधानपुरुषात्मिका ।।३२।।

You have been born out of the divine 'word'[1] and, at the same time, are an embodiment and personification of that divine word (which is OM)[2]. Your another name is 'Naad' (the cosmic vibration of sound)[3] and you are an image, a personification and an embodiment of that Naad[4] (see also verse no. 119). You are beyond the definition of the chief Purush (who is also known as the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic primary Lord of creation)[5], and at same time you are a personification of that chief Purush[6] (32).

[1]शब्दयोनि, [2]शब्दमयी, [3]नादाख्या, [4]नादविग्रहा, [5]प्रधानपुरुषातीता, [6]प्रधानपुरुषात्मिका

पुराणी (१२०) चिन्मयी पुंसामादिः पुरुषरूपिणी ।
भूतान्तरात्मा कूटस्था महापुरूषसंज्ञिता ।।३३।।

[120] You are ancient and lauded by the Purans[1]. You are enlightened[2] pure consciousness[3]. You are the primary and ancient supreme Male aspect of creation[3] as well as a manifestation of that Male[4]. [Here, the Male represents the Viraat Purush or the Supreme Being of this creation from whom 'Shakti' or Mother Nature emerged.] You are the Atma (soul/spirit) that resides in the heart/bosom of all creatures[5]. One of your glorious titles is 'Maha Purush' (meaning the great Soul or the exalted one)[6] (33).

[1]पुराणी, [2]चिन्मयी, [3]पुंसामादिः, [4]पुरुषरूपिणी, [5]भूतान्तरात्मा कूटस्था, [6]महापुरूषसंज्ञिता

जन्ममृत्युजरातीता सर्वशक्तिसमन्विता ।
व्यापिनी चानवच्छिन्ना (१३०) प्रधाना सुप्रवेशिनी ।।३४।।

You are beyond the purview of birth, death and decrepit old age[1]. [That is, you are eternal and always healthy; you never take a birth nor die or become old because these are the characteristic features of a mortal world, but you are immortal.] You are omnipotent and almighty[2], all-pervading, omnipresent and immanent[3]. [130] You are immutable, indivisible, non-partitionable and non fractionable[4]. You are the one who has access to (or literally can enter) the private chambers (abodes) of the chief Authority of creation (i.e., you are the divine consort of the Supreme Being who is the Lord of all creation and its chief authority. Being his divine consort, you have free access

to his abode in the heavens. You are close to him)[5] (34).

[1]जन्ममृत्युजरातीता, [2]सर्वशक्तिसमन्विता, [3]व्यापिनी, [4]चानवच्छिन्ना, [5]प्रधाना सुप्रवेशिनी

क्षेत्रज्ञा शक्तिरव्यक्तलक्षणा मलवर्जिता ।
अनादिमायासम्भिन्ना त्रितत्वा प्रकृतिर्गुणः (१४०) ।।३५।।

You have a complete and comprehensive knowledge of the entire realm of the creation and have a sway over it[1]. You are possessed of Shakti (divine powers, potentials, strengths and authority)[2] as well as the virtues and attributes which are imperceptible and invisible for the common eye[3]. You are devoid of all the faults, flaws, shortcomings and other negative traits that are associated with this mortal creation[4]. You are without a beginning[5], are distinct from Maya which is the ancient and traditional delusionary aspect of creation creating deception and having its origin in ignorance about the essential truth that has engulfed the entire creation, though it is associated with you (because the very existence of this creation is because of the delusionary Maya factor created and represented by you)[6]. [That is, Maya has been created by you and it is also associated with you who are enlightened and wise and are supposed to remove Maya from the world, but in order to start this process of creation and perpetuate it, you deemed it necessary to retain this Maya factor with you. Otherwise, if this Maya was not there, the entire creation would have realised the essential truth that whatever is visible is falsehood and the entire world is perishable and mortal, and therefore it is futile to pursue it and remain engrossed in it. Hence, all the creatures would have become renunciate and dispassionate towards this illusionary world, would have become perfect ascetics and renunciates, and the whole process of creation would have come to a grinding halt.] You represent Tritatwa[7], i.e., you are possessed of all the 3 basic ingredients that constitute this Maya[*]. You are manifested as Prakriti (Mother Nature and its qualities, virtues and characteristic features)[8]. [That is, Mother Nature is a manifestation of your stupendous glory, and all the magnificent features that Nature possesses are actually your own magnificent features revealed in the form of Nature.] (35)

[1]क्षेत्रज्ञा, [2]शक्तिर, [3]रव्यक्तलक्षणा, [4]मलवर्जिता, [5]अनादि, [6]अनादिमायासम्भिन्ना, [7]त्रितत्वा, [8]प्रकृतिर्गुणः

[Note :- [*]Maya is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half has a negative connotation. 'Ma' means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of', while the second part 'Ya' means 'this or that'. 'Ma' has a negative connotation. Therefore, the composite word Maya means neither this nor that; anything that is not real; that which is delusionary, illusionary, deceptive, mirage like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define all these phenomenons. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance based, illusionary, impostering, deceitful, invisible and para-natural; all that which has no reality or substance; all that is hollow. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth.

Maya has 3 basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called 'Trigunmayi' (त्रिगुनमयि), i.e., one which has the 3 Gunas or qualities. These 3 Gunas or qualities are— Sat, Raj and Tam. 'Sat' is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. 'Raj' is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. 'Tam' is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, 'Tam' means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These 3 qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of 'Sat' makes a man nobler as compared to a high

ratio of 'Tam' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanours and mental setup in this world.]

महामाया समुत्पन्ना तामसी पौरुषं ध्रुवा ।
व्यक्ताव्यक्तात्मिका कृष्णा रक्तशुक्लाप्रसूतिका ।।३६।।

You are Maha Maya (i.e., the great, magnificent and stupendous maverick force of creation that has created delusions and ignorance and is the moving force of the world of artificiality)[1]. This whole creation has been produced by you (or you have created it) and it possesses this Maya as its inseparable part[2], making you appear to be possessed of these negative traits called Tamsi (such as your present demeanours, countenance, attire, tendencies and your general state in this battlefield)[3]. But, at the same time, you have steady and unwavering strength, vigour, vitality, valour, potentials, potent, push, punch and diligence[4] (which are not possible for any ordinary mortal being who is under the influence Maya). You are manifest as well as un-manifest; you are with attributes as well as without them; you are visible as well as invisible[5]. You are Krishna (dark complexioned Goddess)[6] and are the mother[7] who produces both the blood[8] as well as the white sperm (or semen)[9*] (36).

[1]महामाया, [2]समुत्पन्ना, [3]तामसी, [4]पौरुषं ध्रुवा, [5]व्यक्ता, [6]कृष्णा, [7]रक्त, [8]शुक्ल, [9]प्रसूतिका

[Note :- [*]That is, you represent that divine force which creates both the female creative powers as well as the male creative power in the universe. In other words, you represent that divine macrocosmic Mother Nature in whose womb this entire creation was conceived as well as the female creature symbolised by the menstrual flow of blood; at the same time, you represent the Viraat Purush or Brahma, the creator, who had injected the cosmic sperm into Mother Nature in order to provide her with the divine spark initiating the process of creation, and at the micro level you symbolise the white semen present in a male creature.]

स्वकार्या (१५०) कार्यजननी ब्रह्मास्या ब्रह्मसंश्रया ।
व्यक्ता प्रथमजा ब्राह्मी महती ज्ञानरूपिणी ।।३७।।

[150] You do everything yourself (without any help or advice)[1]. You are the mother who has created the work that is needed to be done in the world (i.e., you are the cause of all the work that needs attention by a creature, and at the same time you do the work yourself, though the creature thinks erroneously that it is he who does it)[2]. You are the creator Brahma in this aspect (because you not only create something but also take care of its fulfillment)[3] as well as Brahm (the primary supreme Authority from whom even Brahma was created)[4]. [That is, even as Brahma creates the world, you too create it along with the different works that the creature does in this world, and in the form of Brahm you do these works yourself even as the supreme, transcendental, sublime and subtle authority, who is the driving forces of this creation and who has created Brahma himself in the first place, does them, albeit subtly, imperceptible, from behind the curtain, as it were, in the form of the Atma residing in the bosom of the creature who erroneously thinks that he, the creature with a mortal and gross body, does that work.]

You are manifested (Vyakta)[5], the first born (i.e., most ancient, the first manifestation of Brahm, the primary force of nature, called Mother Nature, from whom the rest of the creation has unfolded)[6], Brahmi (the female counterpart of the creator Brahma)[7], Mahati (one who is great, famed, majestic, magnificent, marvelous and glorious)[8], and are an embodiment Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment)[9] (37).

[1]स्वकार्या, [2]कार्यजननी, [3]ब्रह्मास्या, [4]ब्रह्मसंश्रया, [5]व्यक्ता, [6]प्रथमजा, [7]ब्राह्मी, [8]महती, [9]ज्ञानरूपिणी

वैराग्यैश्वर्यधर्मात्मा ब्रह्ममूर्ति (१६०) र्हृदिस्थिता ।
जयदा जित्वरी जैत्री जयश्रीर्जयशालिनी ।।३८।।

You are a personification of Vairagya (renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards this world)[1] as well as Aeishwarya (fame, majesty, glory, magnificence, authority)[2]. You are Dharmatma (one who is righteous, noble and virtuous)[3]. [160] You are an image of Brahma[4] established in one's heart (as the Atma)[5]. You are a bestower of victory[6]. You can vanquish and conquer everyone and everything soon, without any delay[7]. You are Jaitri (one who can

conquer the three worlds, e.g., the nether, the subterranean and the celestial)[8]. You are Jailaxmi (the great Goddess of wealth, prosperity and wellbeing who provides victory to those on whom she is benevolent; the word also means the honours that come to a person who gets victory over his enemies and adversaries; victory is a kind of an asset and a cause of honour and respect in the society, hence it is treated as being equivalent to Laxmi representing wealth, prosperity and asset)[9]. You are endowed with or possess the virtue of being victorious everywhere[10]. [In other words, victory comes to you naturally; its an integral aspect of your virtues and potentials. The word 'Jailaxmi' and 'Jaitri' in the last line of the verse also refer to the glory, fame, majesty, pomp, pageant and circumstance that come as an accoutrement of victory and conquest, and these are easily available to you.] (38)

[1]वैराग्य, [2]ऐश्वर्य, [3]धर्मात्मा, [4]ब्रह्ममूर्ति, [5]र्हृदिस्थिता, [6]जयदा, [7]जित्वरी, [8]जैत्री, [9]जयश्री, [10]र्जयशालिनी

सुखदा शुभदा सत्या शुभा (१७०) संक्षोभकारिणी ।
अपां योनिः स्वयम्भूतिर्मानसी तत्त्वसम्भवा ।।३९।।

Your other names which indicate your different glorious and majestic virtues are the following— Sukhda (one who gives pleasure, comfort, happiness and joy)[1], Shubhda (one who gives auspiciousness and welfare)[2], Satya (one who is truthful)[3], [170] and Shubh (one who is auspicious and a herald of goodness)[4]. You cause one to be restless, active and agile[5]. You are manifested as 'water' which is the basic element of creation and the basic breeding ground for it, for without water no creature can either come into being or survive, thus providing it with the conducive environment to breed and then sustain the procreation which results from such breeding[6]. You have manifested yourself out of your own free will[7]. You have come into existence in your present form as Mahakali because your mind decided to do so[8]. This is a basic fact and the primary factor which has made your present manifestation as Mahakali possible[9]. [That is, you have manifested in your present form as the ferocious, formidable, fearsome looking and awe inspiring Goddess in the battlefield because you have decided to

do so yourself. Otherwise, you have always been present in your docile, charming, calm, benevolent, merciful and sweet form as Sita, and you could have killed these demons merely by your wish instead of having to assume your present form of Mahakali.] (39)

[1]सुखदा, [2]शुभदा, [3]सत्या, [4]शुभा, [5]संक्षोभकारिणी, [6]अपां योनिः, [7]स्वयम्भूति, [8]र्मानसी, [9]तत्त्वसम्भवा

ईश्वराणी च सर्वाणी शंकरार्द्धशरीरिणी ।
भवानी चैव रुद्राणी (१८०) महालक्ष्मीरथाम्बिका ।।४०।।

You are the supreme Goddess called Ishwarani[1]. You are the supreme Authority vested with the all encompassing supreme powers over the whole creation[2]. You form the one half (i.e., the left half) of the divine cosmic body of Lord Shiva[3] (see also verse no. 42), and are also known as Bhavani (which is another name for Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva)[4], [180] Rudrani (the divine consort of Rudra, the angry manifestation of Shiva)[5], Maha Laxmi (the great Goddess of wealth and prosperity who is the divine consort Lord Vishnu, the sustainer and protector of the creation), and Ambika (the divine mother)[7] (40).

[1]ईश्वराणी, [2]सर्वाणी, [3]शंकरार्द्धशरीरिणी, [4]भवानी, [5]रुद्राणी, [6]महालक्ष्मी, [7]ऽम्बिका

माहेश्वरी समुत्पन्न भुक्तिमुक्तिफलप्रदा ।
सर्वेश्वरी सर्ववर्णा नित्य मुदितमानसा ।।४१।।

You are Maheshwari (literally, the great Goddess who is a divine consort of Maheshwar or Lord Shiva who is also the great and superior God amongst all the Gods)[1] who reveals herself when the need arises[2]. You are the one who enjoys this world[3], and are the one who bestows the reward or boon of 'Mukti' (i.e., liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation) from this world to your devotees[4] (see also verse nos. 107 and 115). You are the Lord and Mistress of all that exists[5]. You are an image of the entire creation, including all its classes, sections, castes and creeds as well as all the myriad and various forms of its creatures of different shapes, sizes, hues and contours[6]. You are eternal and infinite[7]. You have a cheerful heart and mind[8] (41).

[1]माहेश्वरी, [2]समुत्पन्न, [3]भुक्ति, [4]मुक्तिफलप्रदा, [5]सर्वेश्वरी, [6]सर्ववर्णा, [7]नित्य, [8]मुदितमानसा

ब्रह्मेन्द्रोपेन्द्रनमिता शंकरेच्छानुवर्तिनी (१९०)।

ईश्वरार्द्धासनगता रघूत्तमपतिव्रता ।।४२।।

Even Brahma (the creator), Indra (king of Gods) and Upendra (the assistant of Indra) bow reverentially before you to pay their respects[1]. [190] You carryout the wishes of Lord Shiva[2]. You have the honour of occupying one half of the exalted seat of Lord God called Ishwar (i.e., Supreme Being)[3] as his macrocosmic counterpart called Mother Nature or Prakriti (see also verse no. 40) which has revealed itself as Sita who is the loyal and chaste wife[4] of the most exalted and the most excellent member of the Raghu's clan (i.e., Sri Ram)[5] (42).

[1]ब्रह्मेन्द्रोपेन्द्रनमिता, [2]शंकरेच्छानुवर्तिनी, [3]ईश्वरार्द्धासनगता, [4]पतिव्रता, [5]रघूत्तम,

[Note :- Even a cursory reading of the text shows that the supreme Goddess is treated as both the male and the female aspects of creation (see verse nos. 31-33, 36-37), as the macrocosmic divine consort of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma simultaneously as well as the microcosmic form of hers as Sita who is the wife of Sri Ram (see verse no. 42). Sri Ram, in essence, is a manifestation of Brahm, and this Brahm encompasses not only all the three trinity Gods but also the rest of the creation. Similarly, Sita also encompasses the entire Shakti aspect of creation which is the divine energy, power and strength relying upon which Brahm had created, sustains and would annihilate the world in its final moments (see verse no. 35). That is why this Canto is regarded as the metaphysical interpretation of the story of Ramayan which especially highlights the divine aspect of Sita as the macrocosmic Mother Nature manifested in her microcosmic body.]

सकृद्विभाविता सर्वा समुद्रपरिशोषिणी ।
पार्वती हिमवत्पुत्री परमानन्ददायिनी ।।४३।।

You think about the welfare and wellbeing of all at once[1]. You can oppress (i.e., control, put under leash or dry up) the ocean (which is generally regarded as most unconquerable, indomitable and fearless)[2]. You are known as Parvati (the divine consort of Shiva)[3] who was the daughter of Himwan (the snow capped Himalayas personified— see verse nos. 115 and 132))[4] and who bestows supreme bliss and beatitude, joy and felicity upon your devotees[5] (43).

[1]सकृद्विभाविता सर्वा, [2]समुद्रपरिशोषिणी, [3]पार्वती, [4]हिमवत्पुत्री, [5]परमानन्ददायिनी

गुणाढ्या योगदा (२००) योग्या ज्ञानमूर्तिर्विकाशिनी ।
सावित्री कमला लक्ष्मीश्रीरनन्तोरसि स्थिता ।।४४।।

You possess the best of virtues, qualities and characteristics[1]. [200] You provide success in Yoga (meditation and contemplation)[2]. You are a personification or an embodiment of Yagya[3] and Gyan[4] (i.e., you personify religious pursuits such as fire sacraments and righteous vows and actions as well as truthful knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment), while at the same time you enhance Gyan in those who already posses it and raise the stature of and develop it further[5]. [That is, you increase the potentials of those persons who already have Gyan and who do Yagya if you are benevolent upon them.] You are known as Savitri[6], Kamla[7], Laxmi[8] and Sri[9] who reside in the heart of Anant, i.e., the Lord who is eternal and without an end, generally regarded as Lord Vishnu[10] (see note to verse no. 46) (44).

[1]गुणाढ्या, [2]योगदा, [3]योग्या, [4]ज्ञानमूर्ति, [5]र्विकाशिनी, [6]सावित्री, [7]कमला, [8]लक्ष्मी, [9]श्री, [10]ऽनन्तोरसि स्थिता

सरोजनिलया शुभ्रा योगनिद्रा (२१०) सुदर्शना ।
सरस्वती सर्वविद्या जगज्ज्येष्ठा सुमंगला ।।४५।।

You are seated on a lotus flower[1]. You are auspicious and holy[2]. [210] You are perpetually engrossed in deep meditation and are established in a deep sleep state of consciousness, called Yog Nidra[3] (see verse nos. 65, 108 and 127 also). Your other names are—Sudarshana (one who holds a discus)[4], Saraswati (the Goddess of learning, scholarship, intelligence, wisdom and speech)[5] and Sarva-Vidya (one who possesses all knowledge)[6]. You are the eldest one in this creation (i.e., you were born first and before the rest of the creation came into being)[7], and you are very auspicious, holy, divine and august[8] (45).

[1]सरोजनिलया, [2]शुभ्रा, [3]योगनिद्रा, [4]सुदर्शना, [5]सरस्वती, [6]सर्वविद्या, [7]जगज्ज्येष्ठा, [8]सुमंगला

वासवी वरदा कीर्तिः सर्वार्थसाधिका (२२०)।
वागीश्वरी सर्वविद्या महाविद्या सुशोभना ।।४६।।

You are the divine consort of Indra (called Vasvi)[1]; you are the authority who gives boons and blessings[2]; you are the one whose

glories, magnificence, majestic powers are well known and famous throughout the realm[3]. [220] You understand the meaning of everything (i.e., you are very wise, intelligent, erudite and scholarly)[4]; you are the Goddess of speech (i.e., Saraswati)[5]; you personify all the knowledge that exist at the worldly level[6] as well as at the higher ethereal level of sublimity, called the Mahavidya (literally, the great knowledge of creation, and it pertains to the Atma and Brahm)[7]. You look adorable and admirable, auspicious and charming with these immaculate glories and virtues that you posses[8] (46).

[1]वासवी, [2]वरदा, [3]कीर्तिः, [4]सर्वार्थसाधिका, [5]वागीश्वरी, [6]सर्वविद्या, [7]महाविद्या, [8]सुशोभना

[Note :- The word 'Vasav' 'वासव' means Indra, the king of Gods. Vasavi, therefore, is the feminine gender of Vasav, thereby meaning 'lady Indra'. Here it means that the queen of Gods is being honoured by these names. We must remember the context of this prayer —Sri Ram is praying not to a particular Goddess but to the universal cosmic power and supreme Authority from whom the rest of the creation has come into being, be it male or female, be it animate or inanimate, and be it animal, bird, reptile, human or God. Hence, the supreme Shakti or the divine, sublime energy of Nature has revealed itself in myriad forms to fulfill the different tasks needed to be done in order to keep the wheel of creation running smoothly. So, the divine Goddess is as much a consort of Indra as she is of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. Similarly she is Savitri (representing the energy of the sun), Saraswati (representing the Goddess of speech and wisdom), Gyan (representing knowledge and erudition and enlightenment), Yoga (representing mediation and concentration) etc. all rolled into one single entity called the great Goddess, who has now manifested herself as Mahakali on the battlefield of Pushkar according to the demands of the circumstance. See also verse no. 44-45.]

गुह्यविद्यात्मविद्या च सर्वविद्यात्मभाविता ।
स्वाहा विश्वम्भरी (२३०) सिद्धिः स्वधा मेधा धृतिः श्रुतिः ।।४७।।

You are an embodiment of and most proficient in the most secret,

most esoteric, most difficult, most complicated, most subtle and most profound knowledge[1] pertaining to the Atma which is pure consciousness; this knowledge is called Atmvidya[2] which is deemed to be equivalent to knowing all that is to be known in this world[3]. You are firmly established and always engrossed in contemplation upon the Atma[4]. You are Swaha (the divine consort of the Fire-God)[5], Vishwambhari (the mother earth; divine consorts of Vishnu and other Gods who sustain and protect the world)[6], Siddhi (mystical powers, successes and accomplishments personified)[7], Swadha (the daughter of Prajatpati Daksha; offerings made to dead ancestors that sustain them in their spirit forms)[8], Medha (the power to remember and recollect; memory personified)[9], Dhriti (the daughter of Prajapati Daksha and wife of Dharma, the patron God of righteousness; also meaning stability of mind; the power to catch hold of anything and firmly grasp it)[10] and Sruti (the Vedas and others scriptures having an oral tradition; the knowledge contained therein personified)[11] (47).

[1]गुह्यविद्या, [2]आत्मविद्या, [3]सर्वविद्या, [4]आत्मभाविता, [5]स्वाहा, [6]विश्वम्भरी, [7]सिद्धिः, [8]स्वधा, [9]मेधा, [10]धृतिः, [11]श्रुतिः

नाभिः सुनाभिः सुकृतिर्माधवी नरवाहिनी (२४०)।
पूजा विभावरी सौम्या भगिनी भोगदायिनी ।।४८।।

Your other names are— Naabhi (the central core, the axis, the axle, the pith of anything; the navel through which the embryo is attached to its mother and derives its nourishment from her; here meaning the central authority around which the whole cosmos revolves much like the planets revolving around the sun in the solar system)[1], Sunabhi (an authority that is auspicious and has good name and fame)[2], Sukriti (good deeds personified)[3], Madhavi (a famous creeper bearing fragrant flowers; the auspicious and holy basil or Tulsi leaves; Goddess Durga; the divine consort of Madhav which is another name for Lord Vishnu or Narayan)[4], [240] Narvahini (the divine consort of Kuber or Narvaha, the treasurer of Gods)[5], Pujya (one who is honourable, adorable, revered and worthy of worship)[6], Vibhavari (the night in which stars shine brightly)[7], Saumya (one who is sober, pleasant, calm and peaceful,

debonair and Sauvé; also means one type of Chanda or poetical composition called Araya)[8], Bhagini (the divine womb of Mother Nature personified; a divine sister; a celibate nun)[9], and Bhogdaini (one who bestow comfort, pleasure and happiness to her devotees as well as makes evil and pervert ones suffer from punishment for their wicked deeds)[10] (48).

[1]नाभिः, [2]सुनाभिः, [3]सुकृति, [4]र्माधवी, [5]नरवाहिनी, [6]पूजा, [7]विभावरी, [8]सौम्या, [9]भगिनी, [10]भोगदायिनी

शोभा वंशकरी लीला मानिनी परमेष्ठिनी (२५०)।
त्रैलोक्यसुन्दरी रम्या सुन्दरी कामचारिणी ।।४९।।

You are Sobha (auspicious, charming, adorable and worthy of being admired and lauded)[1]; you are Vanshakari (the sustainer and enhancer of the clan and family of the entire clan and near family of your devotees)[2]; you are known as Leela (a maverick player and performer of strange, mysterious and magical deeds which are beyond comprehension)[3]; you are Manini (honourable, revered and admirable)[4]; [250] you are Paramesthi (i.e., the divine consort of Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the sustainer, Shiva, the annihilator, the Viraat Purush who is the all-encompassing macrocosmic Supreme Being from whom the rest of the Gods and the creation had emerged, and the Fire-God— see verse no. 75 of this canto 25 and verse no. 13 of canto 26)[5]; you are Trilokya Sundari (the most beautiful and enchanting aspect of creation including all the 3 worlds called Triloki)[6]; you are Rama (another name of Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth, prosperity and material well being who is the consort of Lord Vishnu) as well as Ramya (most charming and pleasant)[7]; you are Sundari (beautiful and enchanting)[8]; and you are Kaam Charini (i.e., you can do whatever you wish to do, go wherever you like to go and assume any form that you want to assume)[9] (49).

[1]शोभा, [2]वंशकरी, [3]लीला, [4]मानिनी, [5]परमेष्ठिनी, [6]त्रैलोक्यसुन्दरी, [7]रम्या, [8]सुन्दरी, [9]कामचारिणी

महानुभावमध्यस्था महामहिषमर्दिनी ।
पद्ममालांपापहरा विचित्रमुकुटानना ।।५०।।

You are at the core of the glory and majesty of those who are

great, honourable, worthy and respected[1]. You are the one who has slayed the great demon in the form of a buffalo (i.e., you are Goddess Durga herself)[2]. You wear a garland of lotus flowers[3] and are a vanquisher of sins[4]. You wear a strange, marvelous and fantastic crown symbolising your glories[5] (50).

[1]महानुभावमध्यस्था, [2]महामहिषमर्दिनी, [3]पद्ममालां, [4]पापहरा, [5]विचित्रमुकुटानना

कान्ता (२६०) चित्राम्बरधरा दिव्याभरणभूषिता ।
हंसाख्या व्योमनिलया जगत्सृष्टिविवर्द्धिनी ।।५१।।

[260] You are Kanta (i.e., you have a radiance that resembles a divine, holy and sublime halo)[1], are attired in colourful attires[2], are adorned with divine and magnificent ornaments[3], are a resident of the glorious place where the divine swans dwell (i.e., you live in the heart of a wise and enlightened creature because this swan symbolises wisdom, erudition and enlightenment and is supposed to be living in the heart of a Yogi, a wise ascetic)[4], are present in the sky, called Vyom[5], and are the authority who has created this creation, enhances, sustains and develops it[6] (51).

[1]कान्ता, [2]चित्राम्बरधरा, [3]दिव्याभरणभूषिता, [4]हंसाख्या, [5]व्योमनिलया, [6]जगत्सृष्टिविवर्द्धिनी

निर्यन्त्रा मन्त्रवाहस्था नन्दिनी भद्रकालिका ।
आदित्यवर्णा (२७०) कौमारी मयूरवरवाहिनी ।।५२।।

You are the authority that controls and regulates everything[1]. You are beyond the reach of Mantras (you are superior to Mantras which are themselves holy words empowering a person with divine glories and gives him access to superior virtues and powers represented by the patron Gods of the Mantras)[2]. You are Nandini (one of the divine and holy cows— see verse no. 91)[3]. You are Bhadra Kalika (the divine Goddess of death and destruction who is fearful and dark complexioned but merciful, gentle and sober for her devotees)[4]. [270] You are splendours, dazzling, radiant, brilliant and bright like the Sun known as Aditya[5]. You are a Kumari, i.e., a virgin lady[6]. You are the female aspect of Kartikeya* who rides upon a peacock[7]. (52).

[1]निर्यन्त्रा, [2]मन्त्रवाहस्था, [3]नन्दिनी, [4]भद्रकालिका, [5]आदित्यवर्णा, [6]कौमारी, [7]मयूरवरवाहिनी

[Note :- *'Kartikeya' is the patron God of war. Here it means that Kartikeya derives his powers and authority to win the battles by the virtue of benevolence and graciousness of the great Goddess.]

वृषासनगता गौरी महाकाली सुरार्चिता ।
आदितिर्नियता रौद्री पद्मगर्भा (२८०) विवाहना ।।५३।।

You are seated on a buffalo[1]. You are also known as Gauri (i.e., the fair complexioned Goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva— see also verse no. 110)[2] and Mahakali (literally the great black complexioned Goddess of death and annihilation)[3] who is worshipped, honoured and revered by the Gods[4]. You are a personification of Aditi (the mother of Gods)[5] and Niyati (a regulating authority of destiny, fate and luck)[6]. You are the divine consort of Rudra (Shiva), hence called Raudri[7]. [280] You symbolise the ovary of the lotus flower, hence called Padma Garbha[8]. You are perpetually married to (i.e., are loyal to and have a steady allegiance towards) the Supreme Divinity[9] (53).

[1]वृषासनगता, [2]गौरी, [3]महाकाली, [4]सुरार्चिता, [5]आदिति, [6]र्नियता, [7]रौद्री, [8]पद्मगर्भा, [9]विवाहना

विरूपाक्षी लेलिहाना महासुरविनाशिनी ।
महाफलानवद्यांगी कामपूरा विभावरी ।।५४।।

You are known as Virupakshi (the divine consort of Lord Shiva who is also known as Virupaksh because Shiva has an unconventional existence. He wears lion skin as a loin cloth, has serpents as his ornaments, remains with half-opened sleepy eyes in a state of perpetual deep meditation, has moon on his forehead as his ornament, lives in secluded places and cremation grounds, has the company of ghosts and phantoms, smears ash of the sacrificial fire on his body, and remains naked except for the loin cloth and serpents to cover his body. When he gets angry, he opens his 3rd eye located at the tri-junction of the root of the nose and the eyebrows which spews violent blazing fire to burn the target of his wrath. See also verse no. 56)[1]. You lick your lips with your tongues (during your present ferocious and cruel form as the blood thirsty Goddess of death and destruction in the battlefield of Pushkar; here meaning that you are always eager for the blood of those who are wicked, evil and sinful like the demons)[2]. You are a slayer and

eliminator of the great evil demons[3]. You are a bestower of great boons and rewards (upon those who are good, righteous and noble)[4]. You help in fulfillment of all desires, aspirations, hopes and deeds[5]. You are like a dark night with glittering stars (i.e., you are dark complexioned like the night and your body has so many decoration upon it that they resemble the twinkling stars of the night sky; these stars also represent the countless number of virtues that you possess although you appear to be dark symbolising the Tam quality which are negative aspects, such as anger and wrath, being vicious, merciless and cruel in your manifestation as Mahakali. See note to verse no. 35 in this context.)[6] (54).

[1]विरूपाक्षी, [2]लेलिहाना, [3]महासुरविनाशिनी, [4]महाफलानवद्यांगी, [5]कामपूरा, [6]विभावरी

विचित्ररत्नमुकुटा प्रणतर्द्धिविवर्द्धिनी (२९०)।
कौशिकी कर्षिणी रात्रिस्त्रिदशार्त्तिविनाशनी ।।५५।।

You wear a strange but magnificent crown (which symbolises your virtues, glories and fame, though it is not a physical crown but only a symbolic one)[1]. [290] You are the one who enhances the welfare and well being, the good luck and fortunes, the prosperity and wealth, of your devotees[2]. You are Kaushiki (i.e., Chandika, the Goddess with an angry and wrathful and vehement countenance)[3], Karshini (one who attracts and pulls as well as one who scatters and disperses)[4], and Ratri (like the night, because you are dark complexioned in your manifestation as Mahakali —see verse no. 53 also)[5]. You are the destroyer of the troubles and torments that cause misery to the Gods[6] (55).

[1]विचित्ररत्नमुकुटा, [2]प्रणतर्द्धिविवद्धिनी, [3]कौशिकी, [4]कर्षिणी, [5]रात्रि, [6]स्त्रिदशार्त्तिविनाशनी

विरूपा च सरूपा च भीमा मोक्षप्रदायिनी ।
भक्तार्त्तिनाशिनी भव्या (३००) भवभावविनाशिनी ।।५६।।

You are Virupa (i.e., you have unconventional, distorted, terrifying and ugly features— see also verse nos. 54, 66 and 76)[1] on the one hand, and on the other you are Surupa (i.e., one who is pleasant, charming and endearing to look at— see verse no. 39 also)[2]. You are Bhima (the divine consort of both Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, i.e., Goddess Parvati and Laxmi respectively; the word also means strong, robust, powerful, terrifying, huge, colossus and formidable;

it also means one who has weight, gravity, worth and whose words and presence carry a lot of authority, importance and significance)[3]. You are a bestower of Moksha (emancipation and salvation)[4] and are the one who destroys the sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulation of your devotees[5]. (See also verse no. 107). [300] You are grand, majestic, magnificent and glorious[6] as well as are the eliminator of all illusions, delusions and misconceptions pertaining to this mundane, artificial world of falsehoods and entrappings[7] (56).

[1]विरूपा, [2]सरूपा, [3]भीमा, [4]मोक्षप्रदायिनी, [5]भक्तार्त्तिनाशिनी, [6]भव्या, [7]भवभावविनाशिनी

निर्गुणा नित्यविभवा नि:सारा निरपत्रपा ।
यशस्विनी सामगीतिर्भावांगनिलयालया ।।५७।।

You are Nirgun (without any forms, attributes and definable characteristics; you are neutral and invisible)[1]. You are eternally Vibhav (rich, wealthy, magnanimous, gracious, majestic and plentiful)[2]. You are without any grossness[3] and shame[4] (i.e., you are brave, bold, courageous and daring; although your present form as Mahakali appears to be demeaning to your exalted stature as the supreme, divine, benevolent and sweet mother of creation, but you do not feel ashamed of your gross and crass behaviour in this form because you had to do a formidable task of killing the evil demons which would not have been possible had you not assumed this fierce and most unsavoury form). You are famed and glorious, renowned and majestic[5]. You sing the hymns of the Sam Veda[6]. You can liberate a person from getting trapped in the endless cycle of transmigration (birth and death)[7] (57).

[1]निर्गुणा, [2]नित्यविभवा,[3]नि:सारा, [4]निरपत्रपा, [5]यशस्विनी, [6]सामगीति, [7]र्भावांगनिलयालया

दीक्षा (३१०) विद्याधरी दीप्ता महेन्द्रविनिपातिनी ।
सर्वातिशायिनी विद्या सर्वशक्तिप्रदायिनी ।।५८।।

[310] You are a personification of Diksha (the formal process of initiation of a disciple by a teacher in any spiritual discipline)[1] and an embodiment of Vidya itself (i.e., you personify knowledge and erudition for which a disciple has been initiated by his teacher)[2]. You are Diptaa (radiant, splendorous, brilliant and glorious)[3]. You can overcome and crush even the huge mountains known as Mahendra (i.e., you can surmount the greatest of difficulties and

circumstances, and vanquish the greatest of enemies and hurdles)[4]. You are a bestower of Vidya (knowledge, erudition, wisdom, skills, scholarship and expertise)[6] as well as all the Shaktis (strength, vigour, potent, authority, powers and valour etc. upon those on whom you are benevolent, magnanimous and benign)[7] (58).

[1]दीक्षा, [2]विद्याधरी, [3]दीप्ता, [4]महेन्द्रविनिपातिनी, [5]सर्वातिशायिनी, [6]विद्या, [7]सर्वशक्तिप्रदायिनी

सर्वेश्वरप्रिया ताक्ष्र्यी समुद्रान्तरवासिनी ।
अकलंका निराधरा (३२०) नित्यसिद्धा निरामया ।।५९।।

You are a dear consort of the great Lord of all, called Sarveshwar[1]. You observe, see and witness everything that is happening[2]. You reside inside the ocean (i.e., you represent the mermaid as well as all the treasures of the ocean)[3]. You are without any Kalank (i.e., you are free from all blemishes, taints, slander, aspersions, slur, blot, infamy, stigma and ignominy of any kind)[4]. [320] You don't need any support, help or prop for yourself[5]. You are eternally Siddha (accomplished, successful, fulfilled)[6] and Niramaye (healthy, without any ailments or faults)[7] (59).

[1]सर्वेश्वरप्रिया, [2]ताक्ष्र्यी, [3]समुद्रान्तरवासिनी, [4]अकलंका, [5]निराधरा, [6]नित्यसिद्धा, [7]निरामया

कामेधेनुर्वेदगर्भा धीमती मोहनाशिनी ।
निःसंकल्पा निरातंका विनया विनयप्रदा (३३०) ।।६०।।

You are like Kaamdhenu (the celestial cow of the Gods which has the special quality of fulfilling all wishes)[1]. The Vedas have been born (created) of you[2]. You are Dhimiti (wise, erudite, sagacious and adroit)[3]. You are a destroyer of a Moha (delusions about and attachments with this materialistic world; passions, infatuations and endearments with the objects of the world)[4]. You do not make any Sankalp (i.e., you do not have any aspirations, ambitions, volitions, desires and hopes pertaining to this mundane and artificial world and its objects of comfort and pleasure)[5]. You are eternal and without an end[6]. [300] You give the virtue of humility and simplicity to your devotees, the virtues that you represent yourself[7] (60).

[1]कामेधेनु, [2]वेंदगर्भा, [3]धीमती, [4]मोहनाशिनी, [5]निःसंकल्पा, [6]निरातंका, [7]विनया विनयप्रदा

ज्वालामालासहस्राढ्या देवदेवी मनोन्मनी ।
उर्वी गुर्वी गुरुः श्रेष्ठा सगुणा षड्गुगात्मिका ।।६१।।

You appear to be wearing a garland which is as splendorous and

magnificent as thousands of flames of fire[1]. You are the great Goddess of even the Gods (i.e., the Gods praise you)[2]. You are in that exalted stage attained in Yoga (mediation) when the external organs of the body turn inwards, the person becomes introspective and turns to perpetual contemplation and mediation[3]. You are Urvi, i.e., mother earth personified[4]. You are Gurvi (the respected wife of a teacher; also means most prominent, chief and eminent person)[5]. You are Srestha (i.e., the best and most exalted)[6], and you possess all the 6 qualities and virtues considered the most excellent of all the virtues that exist[7] (61).

[1]ज्वालामालासहस्राढ्या, [2]देवदेवी, [3]मनोन्मनी, [4]उर्वी, [5]गुर्वी गुरुः, [6]श्रेष्ठा, [7]सगुणा षड्गुगात्मिका

[Note :- The 6 qualities or Gunas mentioned in the last word are the following— (i) Sham (शम—having self restraint, control, peace, tranquility, serenity, bliss and stoicness as well as equanimity and remaining unruffled), Dam (दम —tolerance, forbearance, fortitude; (iii) Upriti (उद्रिति —renunciation, detachment, dispassion, indifference and non-involvement); (iv) Titksha (तितिक्षा —endurance, patience, fortitude, sufferance, equanimity); (v) Samadhan (समाधान —solution, answer, lack of confusion or doubts, clarity of thoughts and conception); and (vi) Shraddha (श्रद्धा —having faith, belief, conviction, reverence and devotion).]

महाभगवती (३४०) भव्या वसुदेवसमुद्भवा ।
महेन्द्रोपेन्द्रभगिनी भक्तिगम्यपरायणा ।।६२।।

[340] You are the great Goddess known as Bhagwati (literally meaning the great mother from whose womb the rest of the creation has been born, because 'Bhug' means a womb or the female reproductive organ, the vagina and the uterus; one of the names of Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva; also meaning Durga, the Goddess who mounts a lion, and Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge)[1]. You are magnificent, fantastic, glorious, grand and stupendous[2]. The 8 Vasus have been born of you[3]. You are a sister (Bhagini) of Mahendra (Indra) and his junior Gods (Upendra)[4]. You are accessible and attainable only by those who are devoted to you and well steeped in that devotion[5] (62).

[1]महाभगवती, [2]भव्या, [3]वसुदेवसमुद्भवा, [4]महेन्द्रोपेन्द्रभगिनी, [5]भक्तिगम्यपरायणा

[Note :- The 'Vasus' mentioned here are the 8 Gods representing the assets of the world. The other connotations are —wealth, gems, gold, rays, fire, water, Shiva, Vishnu, Sun, Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), a pious and holy person. Since Indra or Mahendra is the king of Gods who patronises all the assets in the world, the Goddess is supposed to be his sister. Further, since the Goddess is a manifestation of mother earth, and Indra sustains it by showering rain upon it, she is also said to be his sister.]

ज्ञानज्ञेया जरातीता वेदान्तविषया गतिः ।
दक्षिणा (३५०) दहना बाह्या सर्वभूतनमस्कृता ।।६३।।

You can be known by acquisition of Gyan or by the medium of enlightenment, knowledge, wisdom and erudition[1]. You are beyond decay and old age (i.e., you remain ever young)[2]. You are the object of study of Vedanta (or, the Upanishads have discussed elaborately about you in great detail, not only as the divine Goddess but also as the macrocosmic form of Nature)[3]. You are the aim of Vedanta and the final resting place of all the creatures[4] (i.e., you are Brahm personified because Brahm is the aim of Vedanta, and it is the resting place of the entire creation according to Vedanta). [350] You are magnanimous, graciousness, kindness and charity personified[5]. You are present everywhere, to the right[6] and to the left[7]. You are worshipped, adored and revered by all the mortal creatures, and all of them bow reverentially before you[8] (63).

[1]ज्ञानज्ञेया, [2]जरातीता, [3]वेदान्तविषया, [4]गतिः, [5]दक्षिणा, [6]दहना, [7]बाह्या, [8]सर्वभूतनमस्कृता

योगमाया विभावज्ञा महामोहा महीयसी ।
सत्या सर्वसमुद्भूतिर्ब्रह्मवृक्षाश्रया (३६०) मतिः ।।६४।।

You are Yogmaya personified (i.e., you represent the personified quality of Maya in all her grandeur and majesty, possessing all the powers and strength that Yoga can bestow upon it)[1] and you know or understand the subtle but profound meaning of it[2]. You are Maha-Moha (i.e., the great delusions of creation creating infatuations, attachments and hallucinations pertaining to this artificial and entrapping world)[3]. (See also verse nos. 36 and 44). You are great,

magnificent, stupendous, glorious and majestic[4]. You are truthful[5]. You are the creator or the progenitor of the entire creation[6]. [360] You are like the great celestial tree of the Gods called Brahm Vriksha which gives shelter and refuge to the rest of the creation under its benign shadow[7]. You are Mati (i.e., wisdom, intellect, discrimination, senses, understanding, thoughts and inclinations of a person personified)[8] (64).

[1]योगमाया, [2]विभावज्ञा, [3]महामोहा, [4]महीयसी, [5]सत्या, [6]सर्वसमुद्भुत्ति, [7]ब्रह्मवृक्षाश्रया, [8]मतिः

[Note :- The first word 'Yogmaya' has two parts, Yog and Maya. The word Maya has been elaborately explained as a note to verse no. 35 of this Canto, while Yog means meditation and contemplation. Therefore, Yogmaya refers to that cosmic delusions created by Brahma when he did severe Tapa to initiate the process of creation, thereby producing Maya first. As such, Maya also represents Mother Nature, which is the female counterpart of Brahma or Viraat Purush. Yogmaya is the Maya created by doing Yoga or Tapa.]

बीजांकुरसमुद्भूतिर्ममहाशक्तिर्महामतिः ।
ख्यातिः प्रतिज्ञा चित्संविन्महायोगेन्द्रशायिनी ।।६५।।

You are the factor, energy, force or vitality that enables a seed to sprout into a new shoot[1] (see verse no. 115). You are the great Shakti (energy, force, strength, vitality and powers)[2] that is stupendous, majestic, magnificent, marvelous and fantastic in this creation. You are Mahamati (i.e., you possess great wisdom and intellect)[3] and personify Khyati (i.e., you possess fame and renown)[4]. You personify Pratigya (firm determinations, resolves and vows)[5]. You possess the stupendous powers associated with Chitta (the mind and intellect complex)[6]. You remain fixed, steadfast, peaceful and calm as if eternally sleeping in the great trance-like state obtained by doing profound Yoga (meditation and contemplation; Yog Nidra — see verse no. 45, 108 and 127 also)[7] (65).

[1]बीजांकुरसमुद्भूति, [2]र्ममहाशक्ति, [3]र्महामतिः, [4]ख्यातिः, [5]प्रतिज्ञा, [6]चित्संवि, [7]महायोगेन्द्रशायिनी

विकृतिः (३७०) शंकरी शास्त्री गन्धर्वा यक्षसेविता ।

वैश्वानरी महाशाला देवसेना गुहप्रिया ।।६६।।

[370] You look Vikrit (i.e., deformed, formidable, abominable, terrifying, unconventional and abnormal— see also verse no. 54 and 56)[1]. You are the divine consort of Lord Shankar or Shiva; hence you are called Shankari[2]. You are Shastri (one who has graduated in Sanskrit literature; here meaning that the Goddess is well versed in the scriptures and is an expert in the Shastras)[3]. You are served[4] by the Gandharvas (celestial musicians; a type of demi-God)[5] and Yakshas (the guards of Gods treasury)[6]. You are the Vaishwanar fire, the supreme Lord and pure consciousness personified[7]. You are an abode of all the great virtues and you possess all the great positive traits; hence, you are also known as Mahashala, or the great resting place or a dwelling of all that is great[8]. You single handedly represent the entire army of the Gods (i.e., you can vanquish all the evil and anti-God factors in creation by your own self, and you do not need any other help or any army to do it)[9]. You like to remain in a lonely, secluded, serene, calm and peaceful place like that of a cave[10] (66).

[1]विकृतिः, [2]शंकरी, [3]शास्त्री, [4]सेविता, [5]गन्धर्वा, [6]यक्ष, [7]वैश्वानरी, [8]महाशाला, [9]देवसेना, [10]गुहप्रिया

महारात्री शिवानन्दा शची (३८०) दुःस्वप्ननाशिनी ।
पूज्याऽपूज्या जगद्धात्री दुर्विज्ञेयस्वरूपिणी ।।६७।।

You resemble a great night because you are dark complexioned and apparently look vicious and most cruel and formidable[1]. You remain engrossed in eternal and perpetual bliss and happiness; hence you are also known as Shivanand. You are the one who gives happiness to Lord Shiva, hence you are also called Shivanand[2]. [380] You are Shachi (the divine consort of Indra; you are the queen of Gods because Indra is their king)[3]. You are the eliminator of nightmares (i.e., you remove all fears and consternations in the heart of a creature)[4]. You are adorable, honourable and worthy of worship and reverence[5] as well as are to the contrary[6] (i.e., you represent the great paradox of creation —that is, this creation has both the good and the bad in it existing or cohabiting simultaneously). You are the mother of the universe[7]. You are an embodiment of that

entity which is beyond comprehension and knowledge[8] (67).

[1]महारात्री, [2]शिवानन्दा, [3]शची, [4]दुःस्वप्ननाशिनी, [5]पूज्या, [6]ऽपूज्या, [7]जगद्धात्री, [8]दुर्विज्ञेयस्वरूपिणी

गुहाम्बिका गुहोत्पत्तिर्महापीठा मरुत्सुता ।
हव्यवाहान्तरा (३९०) गार्गी हव्यवाहसमुद्भवा ।।६८।।

You are the mother who lives in a cave (i.e., you prefer solitude and serenity which is conducive to contemplation and meditation— see also verse no. 85)[1]. You have your origin in a virtual void or the cosmic hole[2]. [That is only a metaphor to emphasise the fact that from the darkness of a deep void or hole, the divine energy symbolised by the Goddess has emerged just like a pillar or column of light energy emerges from the mouth of a cave.] You are seated on a majestic seat or throne[3]. [The word also means that your residence is considered as a great pilgrim site.] You are known as Marutsuta, i.e., the daughter of Marut (the Wind-God)[4]. [390] You are present both inside as well as outside of the Havya or Habya, which is the offering made to the fire sacrifice. [That is, you represent the essential elements of food that give it its worth as a life sustaining and nourishing factor, and at the same time you represent the grosser aspects of food —such as its colour and other external features, its tastes and texture, its growth, it having its origin as a plant etc.. If food is a metaphor for life, then the Goddess is that element which not only sustains life from within but also protects it form outside.][5] You are Gargi (Goddess Durga; a famous, wise and erudite lady born in the clan of sage Garg; the wife of sage Yagyawalkya)[6]. You are like an ocean of Havya (which is the food offered to the fire sacrifice; here meaning that there is no shortage of food where you are present; it also means your worship is equivalent to the offering of sacrifices to the Gods; also it refers to the offerings made to the fire sacrifice itself)[7] (68).

[1]गुहाम्बिका, [2]गुहोत्पत्ति, [3]र्महापीठा, [4]मरुत्सुता, [5]हव्यवाहान्तरा, [6]गार्गी, [7]हव्यवाहसमुद्भवा

जगद्योनिर्जगन्माता जगनमृत्युर्जरातिगा ।
बुद्धिर्माता बुद्धिमती पुरुषान्तरवासिनी (४००) ।।६९।।

You are the divine cosmic mother from whose divine womb the whole world has been born[1]. You are the one who can vanquish

and control even death and old age in this world[2]. You are the mother who blesses your devotees with Buddhi (i.e., you bestow them with intelligence, wisdom, rational thinking and discrimination)[3]; you are Buddhi personified (i.e., you are intelligent, wise, erudite, a rational thinker and act after proper thought and discrimination)[4]. [400] You reside in the bosom of Purush (i.e., you are the inspiration that drives the divine Viraat Purush to do what he wishes to do; it also means that you are present in the bosom of all males representing all the characteristics in this creation marked by manliness, bravery, courageousness and boldness; you are the driving force of all the virtues that are represented by the Purush)[5] (69).

[1]जगद्योनिर्जगन्माता, [2]जगनमृत्युर्जरातिगा, [3]बुद्धिर्माता, [4]बुद्धिमती, [5]पुरुषान्तरवासिनी

तपस्विनी समाधिस्था त्रिनेत्रा दिविसंस्थिता ।
सर्वेन्द्रियमनोमाता सर्वभूतहृदिस्थिता ।।७०।।

You are a Tapaswini (the female gender of a Tapaswi, i.e., a person who does Tapa, or keeps rigid righteous vows, does penances, follows austerities, always observes religious sacraments and controls his passions and desires, remains detached from the world and generally undergoes hardships to attune his spirit and endeavours to lift it to a high pedestal— see also verse no. 73)[1]. You are established in eternal Samadhi (a trance-like state of mediation, marked by bliss and total unawareness of the external world— see also verse no. 45)[2]. You have 3 eyes, hence you are known as Trinetra (having two ordinary eyes and one eye of wisdom said to be located at the tri-junction of the eyebrows and the root of the nose; according to another version, this third eye spews fire of wrathful anger at evil and wicked people in the world)[3]. You are established in gold (i.e., wherever you are present, there are riches and prosperity; it also means that wherever there is richness, the Goddess is sure to be present there as Laxmi)[4]. You are the mother (progenitor and a regulator) of all the organs (5 sense organs — eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and 5 organs of action —hands, legs, genital, anus, mouth) as well as the mind (which is the 11th organ)[5]. You dwell in the heart of all mortal creatures called Bhuts (because they are made up of 5 elements —space, air, fire, water, earth called Bhuts— see also verse no. 64)[6] (70).

[1]तपस्विनी, [2]समाधिस्था, [3]त्रिनेत्रा, [4]दिविसंस्थिता, [5]सर्वेन्द्रियमनोमाता, [6]सर्वभूतहृदिस्थिता

संसारतारिणी विद्या ब्रह्मवादिमनोलया ।
ब्रह्माणीवृहती (४१०) ब्राह्मी ब्रह्मभूता भयाविनः ।।७१।।

You take one across the ocean-like world of transmigration. [That is, you provide liberation to the world and its inhabitants form the torments and sufferings of mundane existence— see also verse nos. 41 and 56)[1]. You are Vidya personified (i.e., you are an embodiment of all truthful knowledge, information, science, arts, crafts and skills— see also verse no. 44, 46 and 47)[2]. You are an expert in the essence of the supreme, transcendental knowledge of Brahm (see verse no. 46 also)[3]. You are a dweller in the mind and the heart of a creature[4]. You are Brahmaani (the divine consort of Brahma, the creator)[5]. [410] You are extensive, large, huge, vast, great and colossus in your influence; hence are known as Vrihat[6]. You are Brahmi (the cosmic female aspect of the supreme Brahm, in the form of Mother Nature)[7]. You are the 5 elements produced by Brahm (which are space, air, fire, water and earth, called Bhuts)[8]. You are most horrifying and fear instilling (in the hearts of those who are evil, wicked and pervert)[9] (71).

[1]संसारतारिणी, [2]विद्या, [3]ब्रह्मवादि, [4]मनोलया, [5]ब्रह्माणी, [6]वृहती, [7]ब्राह्मी, [8]ब्रह्मभूता, [9]भयाविनः

हिरण्यमयी महारात्रिः संसारपरिवर्तिका ।
सुमालिनी सुरुपा च तारिणीं भाविनी (४२०) प्रभा ।।७२।।

You are golden in countenance (or you have a gold-like visage; i.e., you are an embodiment of riches, prosperity and well being in this world, the virtues associated with gold. It also means that you are glorious, radiant and splendorous, the virtues associated with the Sun)[1]. Your countenance is dark like a dark night (because you are presently in the form of Mahakali, a word having the component 'Kaali' which literally means black)[2]. You are the authority who can change the world (or can bring about a transition in the present state of the world)[2]. You are Sumalini (a group of words or stanza having 6 syllables or words in each of its steps. Here it simply means that you are wise and an expert scholar who is skilled with words — see also verse no. 76)[4]. You have a beautiful, charming and attractive

countenance[5]. You are the one who provides liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation; hence you are called Taarini (see also verse nos. 56 and 71)[6]. [420] You are present in all the thoughts and emotions of a creature[7]. You are glorious and radiant, bright and brilliant, and have a holy and auspicious splendour effusing like a halo from your divine self, and hence you are known as Prabha[8] (72).

[1]हिरण्यमयी, [2]महारात्रिः, [3]संसारपरिवर्तिका, [4]सुमालिनी, [5]सुरुपा, [6]तारिणीं, [7]भाविनी, [8]प्रभा

उन्मीलनी सर्वसहासर्वप्रत्ययसाक्षिणी ।
तपिनी तापिनी विश्वा भोगदा धारिणीधरा (४३०) ।।७३।।

You are divinity personified, revealed and unfolded in the form of this myriad, colourful world; hence you are called Unmilani[1]. You are the support and foundation, solace and succour as well as the refuge of all[2]. You are a witness to all that is visible[3]. You are Tapa personified (i.e., austerity, penance, sufferance and vows are revealed in your form)[4] as well as the one who does that Tapa (i.e., you are the one who follows the tenets of Tapa— see also verse no. 70)[5]. You are an image of the Vishwa (universe, the entire world)[6]; you are the one who enjoys it[7]; and you are the one who wears it or supports it[8]. [430]You are Mother Earth personified[9] (73).

[1]उन्मीलनी, [2]सर्वसहा, [3]सर्वप्रत्ययसाक्षिणी, [4]तपिनी, [5]तापिनी, [6]विश्वा, [7]भोगदा [8]धारिणी, [9]धरा

सुसौम्या चन्द्रवदना ताण्डवासक्तमानसा ।
सत्त्वशुद्धिकरी शुद्धिर्मलत्रयविनाशिनी ।।७४।।

You are most pleasant, pleasing, charming, gentle, sober, Sauvé and debonair[1]. You are as beautiful as the full moon[2]. You find joy and exhilaration in dancing the cosmic dance called Tandav[3]. You are truthful and a purifier of all[4]. You are pure, uncorrupt, chaste and clean of all blemishes and faults[5]. You are the destroyer of all the 3 legendary torments associated with this creation[6]* (74).

[1]सुसौम्या, [2]चन्द्रवदना, [3]ताण्डवासक्तमानसा, [4]सत्त्वशुद्धिकरी, [5]शुद्धि, [6]र्मलत्रयविनाशिनी

[Note :- *The 3 torments that afflict a creature in this world are the following— (i) Adhibhautic (अधिभौतिक) —torments related to the world, such as enemies, cruel animals, bandits and kings; (ii) Adhidaivic (अधिदैविक) —those torments which pertain to malignant and unfavourable Gods and stars; and (iii) Adidaihik (अधिदैहिक) —those pertaining to bodily ailments, such as disease and other handicaps.]

जगत्प्रिया जगन्मूर्तिस्त्रिमूर्तिरमृताश्रया (४४०)।
निराश्रया निराहारा निरंकुशरणोद्भवा ।।७५।।

You are endeared to the world[1] and are an image of the world (because in your macrocosmic form, you embody the entire world)[2]. You are Trimurti (or you are a personification of all the 3 Gods — Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the sustainer and Shiva the annihilator, all at the same time— see also verse no. 49)[3]. You are an abode or a treasury or a receptacle of Amrit (ambrosia of life, eternity and bliss). [That is, that elixir which bestows life, eternity and bliss is available with you in abundance.][4] [440] You are a self supporting authority and do not need a prop to support you or a foundation to rest upon for your self[5]. You do not need even to eat anything to survive (because you are eternal and never die as well as are a personification of food itself, hence you need not have other nourishment)[6]. You do not have any authority which is superior to you and who would exercise control over you (i.e., you are yourself a senior most authority which control others)[7]. You, as Mahakali, have emerged (or manifested yourself) in this battlefield[8] (75).

[1]जगत्प्रिया, [2]जगन्मूर्ति, [3]स्त्रिमूर्ति, [4]रमृताश्रया, [5]निराश्रया, [6]निराहारा, [7]निरंकुशरणोद्भवा

चक्रहस्ता विचित्रांगी स्रग्विणी पद्मधारिणी ।
परापरविधानज्ञा महापुरुषपूर्वजा ।।७६।।

You hold a Chakra (the discus) in your hand[1]. Your body and countenance are most fascinating and strange as well as mysterious (because it is most unconventional and odd looking— see also verse nos. 54 and 56)[2]. You are a Stragwini (a poetic stanza having 4 Sanskrit or Hindi alphabets 'Ra' 'र' in it; here meaning one he is an expert poet, a learned person, a bard and one who is well versed with scriptures and singing of hymns and can play cleverly with words —see also verse no. 72)[3]. You hold a divine lotus in your hand[4]. You are supreme and transcendental[5] as well as well versed in that supreme and transcendental knowledge which is sublime

and subtle[6]. You are an ancestor of all great and exalted beings (i.e., you are the patriarch of wise, erudite, scholarly class of people)[7] (76).

[1]चक्रहस्ता, [2]विचित्रांगी, [3]स्त्रग्विणी, [4]पद्मधारिणी, [5]परा, [6]परविधानज्ञा, [7]महापुरुषपूर्वजा

विद्येश्वरप्रिया (४५०) ऽविद्या विद्युज्जिह्व जितश्रमा ।
विद्यामयी सहस्त्राक्षी सहस्त्रश्रवणात्मजा ।।७७।।

[450] You are dear to the wise and enlightened Lord of the universe (i.e., you are the divine consort of Lord Vishnu who has manifested himself as Sri Ram, or you are Laxmi manifested as Sita)[1]. You also represent Avidya (that is, since you represent the whole gamut of creation having both the positive as well as the negative traits, the good and the bad, it follows that you must represent ignorance, delusions and lack of erudition and sagacity simply because you also represent wisdom, erudition, scholarship and knowledge — see word no. 5 also)[2]. Your tongue resembles the glittering streak or a 'stab' of lightening, flickering, dazzling, swaying and zigzagging wildly in the sky amongst the bank of clouds[3]. [Here, the dark body of Mahakali is akin to the dark cloud, and her swift, agile, agressive motions as well as her divine glories and majesty are akin to the streak of light stabbing across the body of the cloud.] You are never tired or weary[4]. You are an embodiment of Vidya (knowledge, expertise, skills and arts as well as scholarship and erudition)[5]. [Compare this word Vidya with Avidya mentioned in word no. 2 of this verse.] You have a thousand eyes[6] and are a daughter of the one who has a thousand ears[7] (77).

[1]विद्येश्वरप्रिया, [2]ऽविद्या, [3]विद्युज्जिह्व, [4]जितश्रमा, [5]विद्यामयी, [6]सहस्त्राक्षी, [7]सहस्त्रश्रवणात्मजा

[Note :- (i) The phrase 'a thousand ears' is a figure of speech to indicate the Viraat Purush or Brahm aspect of Mahakali. It also means that Brahm or Viraat Purush or the macrocosmic Supreme Soul of creation has manifested himself in the form of Mahakali. Thousands of ears also mean that the Goddess can hear so many things which are not possible for any ordinary creature to hear. Since the Goddess is a manifestation of Mother Nature called Prakriti, who in turn had been born from Viraat, she is also deemed to be his daughter. She hears everything; she is aware of everything; see knows everything; she is all-knowing and omniscient.

(ii) We must note that the Goddess is said to be a personification of Avidya as well as Vidya because, as explained above, she incorporates all aspects of creation, good and bad, high and low, bright and dark, erudite and stupid, righteous and unrighteous, auspicious and inauspicious.]

सहस्त्ररश्मिमपद्मस्था महेश्वरपदाश्रया ।
ज्वालिनी (४६०) सद्मना व्याप्ता तैजसी पद्मरोधिका ।।७८।।

A thousand rays of radiant light emanate from your body and radiate out from it (see also verse no. 110)[1]. You sit on a lotus flower[2]. You are devoted to and dependent upon the holy, august and divine feet of Lord Maheshwar (i.e., you are the divine consort of Lord Shiva, Parvati, who always serves her Lord Maheshwar, the great Lord or Ishwar)[3]. [460] You are glorious, radiant and brilliant like a fire[4]. You hold a lotus[5], are all pervading and immanent[6], are bright, brilliant and spirited[7], and you exercise self restraint by sitting in a yogic (meditative) posture known as Padmasan, which is to sit in a lotus-like posture of Yoga[8] (78).

[1]सहस्त्ररश्मि, [2]पद्मस्था, [3]महेश्वरपदाश्रया, [4]ज्वालिनी, [5]सद्मना, [6]व्याप्ता, [7]तैजसी, [8]पद्मरोधिका

महादेवाश्रया मान्या महादेवमनोरमा ।
व्योमलक्ष्मीः सिंहरथा केचितान्यमितप्रभा (४७०) ।।७९।।

You are under the protection of and dependent upon Mahadev (Lord Shiva, because you are Parvati, the Goddess who is his consort)[1]. You are honourable, respected, revered, worthy and admired[2]. You are the one who enchants the mind and the heart of Mahadev (Shiva)[3]. You are Goddess Laxmi (the divine consort of Vishnu) who resides in the heaven, called Vyom (literally, the sky)[4]. You are astride a lion (as Goddess Durga)[5]. You are Chekitan (a wise, intelligent, witty, erudite and sagacious Goddess who has splendour, radiance and majesty, and are a divine consort of the great God Shiva)[6]. [470] Your radiance, brilliance, splendour, wisdom and intelligence are measureless and boundless[7] (79).

[1]महादेवाश्रया, [2]मान्या, [3]महादेवमनोरमा, [4]व्योमलक्ष्मीः, [5]सिंहरथा, [6]केचिता, [7]न्यमितप्रभा

विश्वेश्वरी विमानस्था विशोका शोकनाशिनी ।

अनाहता कुण्डलिनी नलिनी पद्मवासिनी ।।८०।।

You are a mistress and the supreme Authority of the whole world[1]. You sit in a plane in the heavens[2]. You have no sorrows, grief or miseries with you[3]; you remove these negative traits causing torments, miseries and troubles to your devotees[4]. You cannot be hurt, injured decapacitated or defeated and subjugated in any way[5]. You are the stupendous cosmic spiritual energy trapped inside the Kundalini present inside a creature[6]. You are Nalini (a dweller inside a lotus flower or a place abundant with such flowers; according to Purans, the word means a stream of the holy river Ganges; a sweet fragrance; a stanza having 5 Hindi or Sanskrit alphabets 'Sa' (स))[7]. You are a dweller inside a lotus flower, or you sit upon such a flower[8] (80).

[1]विश्वेश्वरी, [2]विमानस्था, [3]विशोका, [4]शोकनाशिनी, [5]अनाहता, [6]कुण्डलिनी, [7]नलिनी, [8]पद्मवासिनी

[Note :- (i) The 5th word 'Anahat' has two other connotations— (a) According to science of 'word', it is the normally unheard, inaudible and imperceptible cosmic sound called Naad present everywhere in the cosmos, but it can be heard by a Yogi only when all other interfering sounds originating from the mundane world are shut off, e.g., by closing the ears with fingers. The divine Mantra OM is the finest example of the Anahat sound. See also verse no. 32. (b) According to Yoga, this is the name given to the subtle energy center in the body, called the Chakra.

(ii) Kundalini is a day-to-day word in the realm of the science and philosophy of Yoga. It is an 8-coil energy center lying at the base of the spine. In Yoga, attempts are made to ignite and activate it by doing various exercises called Aasans. To do them, one has to sit chiefly in the Padmasan posture mentioned in verse no. 78, and do Pranayam, which is regulation of the death. Once activated, the trapped subtle energy present in the Kundalini snakes itself up the core of the spine through the Sushumna nerve, and goes right up to the top of the head to give an experience of everlasting bliss to the Yogi.]

शतानन्दा सतां कीर्तिः (४८०) सर्वभूताशयस्थिता ।
वाग्देवता ब्रह्मकला कलातीता कलावती ।।८१।।

You are Shatananda (the female counterpart of Brahma, Vishnu and Lord Krishna; also meaning a bestower of happiness and bliss, called Anand, which is a hundred times, or Shat, more than that given by all other sources)[1]. [480] You embody the glory and fame of all those who are righteous, truthful, virtuous and noble[2]. You pervade all the Bhuts, which are the basic elements of creation (such as space/sky, air/wind, fire/energy, water and earth) as well as all the mortal creatures formed out of these elements (in their various permutations and combinations)[3]. You are a personification of the patron God of speech (i.e., the Fire-God, because according to Upanishads, the Fire-God took up residence in a person's speech at the time of creation)[4]. You represent the Kalaa of Brahm (or the different skills, the different expertise, the wisdom and erudition, the brilliance, grandeur and majesty, the various manifestation and revelations, forms and fractions of the supreme, transcendental authority known as Brahm)[5]. You are even beyond the definition of the word Kalaa (which also means skills, expertise, grandeur, brilliance, tricks, sporting and playful activities, a division or fraction of that Brahm)[6]. You possess the virtues of Kalaa (as defined above), and therefore you are known as 'Kalawati' (one who possesses all the virtues and qualities and characteristic features that define the word Kalaa)[7] (81).

[1]शतानन्दा, [2]सतां कीर्तिः, [3]सर्वभूताशयस्थिता, [4]वाग्देवता, [5]ब्रह्मकला, [6]कलातीता, [7]कलावती

ब्रह्मर्षिब्रह्महृदया ब्रह्म विष्णुशिवप्रिया ।
व्योमशक्तिः क्रियाशक्ति (४९०) र्जनशक्ति परागतिः ।।८२।।

You are like a wise sage or seer who has attained the stature equivalent to that of Brahm, the supreme, transcendental and sublime authority of creation[1]. In fact, you are the symbolic 'heart' (essence) of that Brahm[2]. You are dear to the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu and the concluder Shiva[3]. You are the Shakti (divine energy, powers, potent and strength as well as authority) present in the sky called Vyom (which is the subtlest element of creation and is all

pervading and all encompassing, and in which the most powerful wind and fire elements reside— see also verse nos. 23 and 152)[4]. [490] You are the stupendously powerful force that is produced by any action, called Kriya Shakti (because action is necessary for any endeavour or enterprise to succeed, and this success produces a force that enhances the glory of the person who takes that action, providing him with glory, fame and satisfaction)[5]. You are the force of unity of creation (or the powerful force that is produced when all the creatures of this creation act in sync with each other, when their harmonious actions produce a force powerful enough to overcome the greatest of obstacles or hurdles —you represent that overwhelming force)[6]. You are the supreme, transcendental abode where all the souls find their ultimate rest, peace and solace, called Paragati[7] (82).

[1]ब्रह्मर्षि, [2]ब्रह्महृदया, [3]ब्रह्म विष्णुशिवप्रिया, [4]व्योमशक्ति:, [5]क्रियाशक्ति, [6]र्जनशक्ति, [7]परागति:

क्षोभिका रौद्रिका भेद्या भेदाभेदविवर्जिता ।
अभिन्ना भिन्नसंस्थाना वंशिनी वंशहारिणी (५००) ।।८३।।

You are that Goddess that instills or causes agitation or restlessness and anguish (in the heart of those who are sinful, evil and pervert)[1]. You represent Rudra (Lord Shiva's angry and ferocious form— see also verse no. 103)[2]. You can pierce through anything, can impregnate even the impregnable, can split anything however minute, and can unravel the greatest of mysteries and secret[3]. At the same time, you remain aloof or immune to and indifferent towards such debates or schisms as those arising from differences of opinions, perceptions and understanding about your secrets and mysteries[4]. You are inseparable and one, indivisible, immutable and unfractinable[5]. But at the same time you are present independently, as separate entity in all the individual creatures of this world who are independent and distinct from each other[6]. [That is, though you are one complete indivisible whole, like Brahm, but you have assumed so many innumerable separate identities as there are creatures, all of whom have independent existence, but you reside in each of their bosoms as their Atma.] You are a magnanimous, benevolent and benign Goddess who is the benign benefactor for the clan or family of your devotees[7]. [500] At the same time, you

can eliminate the clan or family of others who are sinful, pervert and unrighteous[8] (83).

[1]क्षोभिका, [2]रौद्रिका, [3]भेद्या, [4]भेदाभेदविवर्जिता, [5]अभिन्ना, [6]भिन्नसंस्थाना, [7]वंशिनी, [8]वंशहारिणी

गुह्यशक्तिर्गुणातीता सर्वदा सर्वतोमुखी ।
भगिनी भगवत्पत्नी सकला कालकारिणी ।।८४।।

You are the secret and mysterious Shakti[1]. You are beyond attributes and your virtues and characteristic features cannot be defined[2]. You are ever present, eternal, everlasting and perennial[3]. You are universal, all-pervading and complete[4]. You are a sister of all of the creatures[5]. You are the divine consort of Lord God[6]. You are an embodiment of all that exists[7]. You are the cause of all circumstance and times (good or bad, fortune as well as misfortunes)[8] (84).

[1]गुह्यशक्ति, [2]गुणातीता, [3]सर्वदा, [4]सर्वतोमुखी, [5]भगिनी, [6]भगवत्पत्नी, [7]सकला, [8]कालकारिणी

सर्ववित्सर्वतोभद्रा (५१०) गुह्यातीता गुहाबलि: ।
प्रक्रिया योगमाता च गन्धा विश्वेश्वरेश्वरी ।।८५।।

[510] You are all-knowing and omniscient[1] as well as auspicious and well being personified[2]. You are more profound than the deepest of mysteries and the greatest of secrets; you are more obscure and hidden than anything else[3]. You reside in a cavern or cave (i.e., you prefer solitude, serenity and tranquility of a cave which is conducive to contemplation and meditation— see also verse no. 68)[4]. You are the 'process' or Prakriya[5] of doing Yoga (i.e., you show how meditation should be actually done), and at the same time, you are the patron goddess of that Yoga, you enable a Yogi to successfully complete his meditation. You take care of all those who do meditation; you protect them and guide and help them to attain success in their endeavour[6]. You are known as Gandha (literally meaning anything which gives out a smell or fragrance or aroma, generally used in Yoga text or formal ritualistic worship process when some scent is burnt to give a divine ambience to the place where such religious exercises are being done)[7]. You are the mistress and supreme Authority who is the Goddess of the whole universe[8] (85).

[1]सर्ववित्स, [2]र्वतोभद्रा, [3]गुह्यातीता, [4]गुहाबलि:, [5]प्रक्रिया, [6]योगमाता, [7]गन्धा, [8]विश्वेश्वरेश्वरी

कपिला कपिलाकान्ता कनकाभा कलान्तरा (५२०)।
पुण्या पुष्करिणी भोक्त्री पुरन्दरपुर:सुरा ।।८६।।

You are known as Kapila (literally one who is simple, straightforward, not crooked and deceitful; also refers to one of the daughters of Prajapati Daksha who was married to sage Kapil)[1]. Your radiance is brilliant, bright and splendorous (i.e., you look glorious and splendorous; the word Kapila also means bright, white, grey)[2]. Your glorious radiance and glowing countenance resembles that of gold[3]. [520] You are present inside the smallest of things[4]. You personify or embody Punya, or all that which is righteous, virtuous and good[5]. You are called Pushkarni (literally a small lake in a pilgrimage site known as Pushkar where Lord Brahma, the creator, is worshipped as the patron deity)[6]. You are the one who enjoys everything (i.e., the whole creation serves you and you are the beneficiary of all the efforts made in this world)[7]. You are foremost amongst those who are conquerors and vanquishers of evil mongers and sinful ones. [The word Purandar 'पुरन्दर' means one who destroys or breaks into a house or a city, e.g., Indra who had destroyed the city of demons; hence, the Goddess represents those good forces in creation which conquer and destroyer the negative forces.][8] (86)

[1]कपिला, [2]कपिलाकान्ता, [3]कनकाभा, [4]कलान्तरा, [5]पुण्या, [6]पुष्करिणी, [7]भोक्त्री, [8]पुरन्दरपुर:सुरा

पोषणी परमैश्वर्यभूतिदा भूतिभूषणा ।
पंचब्रह्मसमुत्पत्तिः परमात्मात्मविग्रहा ।।८७।।

You are the one who sustains and nourishes the whole world[1]. You are the one who bestows great glories and fames, majesties and magnificence[2]. You are the ornamentation of the creation (i.e., it is your presence that lends charm and beauty to this otherwise charmless and ugly world)[3]. You are born out of 'Panch Brahm', the word used for the 5 basic elements of creation (which are space, wind, fire, water and earth) and their respective virtues or powers of perception (such as word or speech, touch or feeling, form or sight, taste and smell respectively)[4]. You are the supreme, transcendental soul called Parmatma[5] at the macro level, and at the same time you are the Atma of the individual creature at the micro level[6] (87).

[1]पोषणी, [2]परमैश्वर्यभूतिदा, [3]भूतिभूषणा, [4]पंचब्रह्म, [6]समुत्पत्तिः, [6]परमात्मात्मविग्रहा

[Note :- 'Panch' means five, and 'Brahm' refers to that entity that gives rise to, or which is the cause of the whole creation coming into being. Since these 5 elements —sky, wind, fire, water and earth —are regarded as the basic ingredients of life, they are treated as being synonymous with Brahm in their separate as well as combined form, because it is from Brahm that the creation has come into being. Another relevant word is 'Panchdev', or the 5 divine Gods of the Hindus. They are the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, the annihilator Shiva, the Fire-God and Indra who is the God of rain or water which sustains life in this world. Other versions describe these 5 Gods as the following —Sun (Aditya), Ganesh (the son of Shiva and Parvati; the God who is worshipped first before the start of any enterprise and who is the patron God of all successes), Goddess, Rudra (Shiva) and Vishnu.]

नर्मोदया (५३०) भानुमती योगिज्ञेया मनोजवा ।
बीजरूपा रजोरूपा वशिनी योगरूपिणी ।।८८।।

[530] You are known as Narmodya[1]* and Bhanumati (i.e., you are as splendorous and radiant as the Sun known as Bhanu)[2]. You are known to and attainable by ascetics who do Yoga (meditation); or you are understood and realised, witnessed and experienced through the process of Yoga[3]. You are the divine consort of Manoj (or Lord Vishnu; that is you are Goddess Laxmi personified) as well as you are as swift and agile as the one of the sons of the Fire-God, also known as Manojav. Besides this, you are beautiful, pleasant, charming, attractive and enchanting for the mind and heart, and that is why you are called Manoj[4]. You are a personification of the seed which is add the root of creation[5]. You are the mensural flow of a fertile woman which helps in the conception of the creation[6].You have the potentials, powers and authority to control all[7], and you are Yoga personified[8] (88).

[1]नर्मोदया, [2]भानुमती, [3]योगिज्ञेया, [4]मनोजवा, [5]बीजरूपा, [6]रजोरूपा, [7]वशिनी, [8]योगरूपिणी

[Note :- *The first word 'Narmodya' refers to Goddess Parvati and Laxmi who are the divine consorts of Lord Shiva and Vishnu respectively. 'Narmada' is one of the 7 holy rivers

of India. It is in Madhya Pradesh state, having its origin from the summit called Amarkantak in the Vindhyachal mountain range and falls into the Arabian Sea near Bharoch. The pebbles flowing in this river are rounded and smooth, and they are worshipped as a symbol of Lord Shiva, called Shiva's lingam, or as Shaligram, a symbol of Lord Vishnu. So that the Goddess, who is the divine consort of either Lord Shiva or Lord Vishnu, also creates these rounded stones which are worshipped as their gross symbols as described above in the Narmada River, and hence she is known as Narmadaya. The word 'Udaya' means to rise. Hence, Shiva and Vishnu have virtually 'risen' from the womb of the divine mother who is the macrocosmic Shakti or female aspect of Brahm. The symbolism is very clear —Vishnu and Shiva, who are manifestations of Brahm, have their origin in the cosmic womb of Brahm represented by the Goddess.]

सुमन्त्रा मन्त्रिणी पूर्णा (५४०) ह्लादिनी क्लेशनाशिनी ।
मनोहरिर्मनोरक्षी तापसी वेदरूपिणी ।।८९।।

You are the one who personifies auspicious Mantras (divine, holy, eclectic and powerful words)[1] and are a good, wise, sagacious, erudite and adroit advisor or minister[2]. [That is, you are a wise teacher, guide and advisor for the whole creation.] [540] You are complete in all respects[3]. You are a provider of exhilaration and happiness[4]. You are a destroyer, a dispeller, an eliminator or remover of torments, miseries, anguish, grief, troubles and tribulation of all kinds[5]. You are charming and pleasing for the mind, or in other words, you attract attention of your devotees by your pleasing, merciful, benevolent and magnanimous stance and demeanours[6]. You can be visualised by the eyes of the mind (i.e., by wisdom, enlightenment, deep insight, contemplation and meditation upon your divine form)[7]. You do Tapa (i.e., you observe a righteous life, do penance and austerities and uphold righteous vows)[8]. You are an embodiment or a personification or a manifestation of the Vedas (i.e., you are wise, enlightenment, learned, scholarly and a treasury of the highest form of knowledge as contained in the Vedas— see also verse nos. 90 and 133)[9] (89).

[1]सुमन्त्रा, [2]मन्त्रिणी, [3]पूर्णा, [4]ह्लादिनी, [5]क्लेशनाशिनी, [6]मनोहरि, [7]र्मनोरक्षी, [8]तापसी, [9]वेदरूपिणी

वेदशक्तिर्वेदमाता वेदविद्या प्रकाशिनी ।
योगेश्वरेश्वरी (५५०) माला महाशक्तिर्मनोमयी ।।९०।।

You embody the powerful potentials and stupendous strength of the knowledge contained in the Vedas[1]. In fact, you are the 'mother' of the Vedas (i.e., you create the knowledge contained in the Vedas, you enhance them, provide nourishment to them, sustain them, take care of them and protect them)[2]. You are a preacher and a teacher par excellence who has brought to light and who has focused the light of wisdom and intellect to illuminate the great and profound knowledge enshrined in the Vedas. You have highlighted that knowledge for the benefit of the world[3]. (See also verse no. 133). [550] You are the patron Goddess of great Yogis (ascetics)[4]. (See also verse no. 27). You are known as Mala, literally a garland but it's a metaphor for possessing all the good virtues and qualities stringed together at one place to adorn the person who possess them. In other words, you posses all the good virtues at one place, one following the other like the beads of a rosary or the flowers threaded in a garland[5]. You are called Maha Shakti or the great super power of creation, possessing stupendous and unprecedented powerful energy, the matchless authority that has effective punch and strength to do anything in this world[6]. You are an entity that resides in the Mana (the mind and heart) of a creature (i.e., you have subtle forms that can be known by the mind and you reside in the heart of your devotees. It also means that you provide intelligence and wisdom to your devotees as well as endow them with righteous and good emotions and sentiments)[7] (90).

[1]वेदशक्ति, [2]र्वेदमाता, [3]वेदविद्या प्रकाशिनी, [4]योगेश्वरेश्वरी, [5]माला, [6]महाशक्ति, [7]र्मनोमयी

विश्वास्था वीरमुक्तिविद्युनमाला विहायसी ।
पीवरी सुरभि वन्द्या (५६०) नन्दिनी नन्दवल्लभा ।।९१।।

You are established uniformly throughout the entire world (i.e., you are all-pervading and omnipresent)[1]. You are a provider of liberation, deliverance and emancipation to those who are brave, courageous, valiant and bold[2]. You are dazzling, brilliant, radiant

and splendours like a series of lightening streaks[3]. You smile most pleasantly, sweetly and endearingly (at your devotees, as a gesture of your love and affection for them)[4]. You are known as Pivari (literally meaning a young lady; a milch cow; a creeper whose roots and seeds are used for medicinal purposes; peach; a kind of medicinal plant called Shallparna. In other word, you have a benevolent presence that provides succour and solace to the creatures, takes care of their nourishment even as a cow provides milk to the people to help them derive balanced nutrition, and you ensure their all round good health and well being even as the various herbs give beneficial effects instead of being harmful to men)[5]. [560] You are honoured, revered, adored, admired and worshipped (Vandya)[6] as Surabhi* (a cow; a mythical Goddess from whom the milch cows are said to have originated; a sweet fragrance or scent; earth; the revered basil (Tulsi) tree; wine or any other fermented liquid —it is admired for its effect on the nerves which makes a man forget about all his miseries and pains as long as the intoxicating effect of that fermented liquid holds)[7]. [See also verse nos. 146.] You are also honoured and worshipped as Nandini**, i.e., you are a bestower of happiness and joy (see also verse no. 53)[8]. You are dear to the king of the cowherd community who was known as Nand (and in whose household Sri Krishna had spent his early childhood)[9] (91).

[1]विश्वास्था, [2]वीरमुक्ति, [3]विद्युनमाला, [4]विहायसी, [5]पीवरी, [6]वन्द्या, [7]सुरभि, [8]नन्दिनी, [9]नन्दवल्लभा

[Note :- More often than not, a word has many connotations and different shades of meaning and applications, quite unrelated and divergent to each other. For example, the 8th word in this verse, Nandini**, also means a cow which was born from Surabhi*, the mythological mother cow from whom all the cows were born and which belonged to sage Vashistha, the royal preceptor of the clan in which Sri Ram was born, the clan of king Raghu. If this meaning is taken into consideration, than the 6th, 7th and 8th words would mean 'you are like the honourable and revered mother of all cows, called Surabhi, from whom the all wish fulfilling cow named Nandini was born'. It's another way for saying that the Goddess is the mother of all good things in life, she is a herald of good fortunes and she fulfils all the wishes and provides for objects that would satisfy all the needs of the creatures.

Further, 'Nandini'** also means a composition having 13 letters or syllables, starting with the alphabet 'Sa' 'स' and followed by the alphabet 'Ja' 'ज' once and then 'Sa' 'स' repeated twice again. With this meaning, the above group of 3 words would mean as follows— 'You are like the great celestial mother called Surabhi* from whom the milk giving cows were born, and who is worshipped, lauded and admired by singing prayers in her honour composed according to the 'Nandini'** style of composition as described above. Another meaning of Nandini is 'a daughter'. Hence, 'you are the great honourable mother called Surabhi from whom the holy and revered cow called Nandini was born'.]

भारती परमानन्दा परापरविभेदिका ।
सर्वप्रहरणोपेता काम्या कामेश्वरेश्वरी ।।९२।।

You are known as Bharti (voice, speech, words; the patron Goddess of these, Goddess Saraswati; a poetic composition which is used to describe anger, horrors and terrifying circumstances)[1]. You are an embodiment of supreme bliss, beatitude and felicity, and you always remain in that state[2]. You are transcendental as well as mundane; you are non-dual as well as have a dual form, one as the trancendental supreme Authority and the other as a Goddess having a form and attributes[3]. You are present in all the divisions of the day (i.e., you are always present everywhere at anytime)[4]. You are charming and attractive[5] as well as the patron Goddess of passions and desires, called Kaam[6] (92).

[1]भारती, [2]परमानन्दा, [3]परापरविभेदिका, [4]सर्वप्रहरणोपेता, [5]काम्या, [6]कामेश्वरेश्वरी

अचिन्त्याऽचिन्त्यमहिमा (५७०) दुर्लेखा कनकप्रभा ।
कूष्माण्डी धनरत्नाढ्या सुगन्धा गन्धदायिनी ।।९३।।

You are beyond the reach of thoughts and imagination[1]. [570] Your glories, majesties and fame are so great that they cannot be understood, comprehended or even be imagined by the mind, thought and intellect[2]. You are beyond the purview of the faculty of

sight (i.e., you are so subtle and sublime that you cannot be seen ordinarily because you are not something that is so gross enough that eyes can see them)[3]. Your radiance is like that of gold[4]. You are known as Kushmandi (a sweet made from pumpkin, considered a very delicious dessert which is succulent and cool; it means that you have these virtues of sweetness and providing cool comfort to your devotees)[5]. You are rich with wealth, gems and various types of jewelry (i.e., you have no dearth of material comforts and objects of prosperous life, and is therefore capable of giving them to your devotees as largesse)[6]. You have an auspicious fragrance emanating from your body[7] and you bestow a pleasant ambiance and aura of divinity and auspiciousness, well being and happiness to the surroundings by your sweet and auspicious presence*. Literally, you spread your divine fragrance everywhere you go, the whole atmosphere is which with the sweet perfume of your divine presence is felt[8] (93).

[1]अचिन्त्या, [2]ऽचिन्त्यमहिमा, [3]दुर्लेखा, [4]कनकप्रभा, [5]कूष्माण्डी, [6]धनरत्नाढ्या, [7]सुगन्धा, [8]गन्धदायिनी

[Note :- *This last word Gandhadaini 'गन्धदायिनी' can be understood if we consider the 'smelly' presence of a 'stinking person' who probably has not taken a bath for a long time in hot countries like India; it is a metaphor for a person who is dirty in all respects. Surely, the presence of such a disgusting person lends the atmosphere an unholy and repulsive ambience as compared to the auspicious presence of a noble person who keeps himself clean and effuses a divine aroma around him. The words 'fragrance or perfume or scent' are only metaphors for the divinity, holiness and auspiciousness emanating from the Goddess, and not some kind of physical scent coming out from her body.]

त्रिविक्रमपदोद्भता धनुष्पाणि: शिरोहया ।
सुदुर्लभा (५८०) धनाध्यक्षा धन्या पिंगललोचना ।।९४।।

You have your origin in the holy and divine feet of Lord Trivikram* (i.e., Lord Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant incarnation of Lord Vishnu)[1]. [That is, you are the holy river Ganges which has its origin from the nails of the toes of Vishnu's feet according to mythology.]

You hold a bow in your hands[2]. You have supreme modesty, prudence, and humility[3]. [580] You are difficult to access by the mind; you are difficult to comprehend and think about[4]. You preside over the wealth and prosperity in this world (i.e., all good fortunes and good luck in this world are under your command; it is you who can bestow well being to the creatures of the world, or those who are your devotees)[5]. You are most honorable, laudable, glorious, prosperous, auspicious, lucky, blessed, blissful and worthy of praise[6]. You have yellow-tinged eyes (like that of a yellow coloured lotus)[7] (94).

[1]त्रिविक्रमपदोद्भता, [2]धनुष्पाणि:, [3]शिरोहया, [4]सुदुर्लभा, [5]धनाध्यक्षा, [6]धन्या, [7]पिंगललोचना

[Note :- * Trivikram—the word 'Tri' is a prefix meaning 'three', and 'Vikram' means 'brave, courageous, bold, heroic, powerful, valorous, valiant, strong, best and excellent'. It also refers to Vishnu because he has all these qualities. According to the Puranic concept, Trivikram refers to Lord Vishnu in his manifestation as the dwarf mendicant called Vaaman who had begged the demon king Baali for land measuring three steps as charity. When Baali had agreed, Vaaman revealed his true identity as Vishnu, who was the Viraat Purush who encompassed the whole creation in his own body. So, in one foot Vishnu measured the whole earth, in the second, the whole sky, and in the third the king's head was measured, symbolically defeating and subjugating him. So, Trivikram refers to the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu from whose navel even the creator Brahma was produced aloft a divine lotus with a long stem, and the holy river Ganges emerged from the toe nails of his divine feet.

According to Vedas, this Viraat Purush is a manifestation of the supreme, transcendental, attributeless, all-pervading and all-encompassing authority of the universe, known as Brahm. Rig Veda, 10/90/4, states that this Brahm has 3 legs (Tri) established in the heavens. The macrocosmic male, called Purush, is its first manifestation; from this Purush came into being this creation consisting of 'those who eat food' (the living creatures of the zoological realm) and 'those who do not eat' (the plants and vegetables of the botanical realm). These three —the Viraat Purush, the living creatures

and the non-living things —formed the 3 legs of Brahm.]

भ्रान्तिः प्रभावती दीप्तिः पंकजायतलोचना ।

आद्या हृत्कमलोद्भूता परामाता (५९०) रणप्रिया ।।९५।।

You create delusions, illusions and hallucinations in the world[1]. You are potent, effective, influential, powerful, dignified, majestic and magnanimous (i.e., these good virtues create a divine aura of glory around you)[2]. You are glorious, radiant, splendorous and resplendent with divinity and sublimity[3]. Your eyes are like a lotus flower[4]. You are from the beginning of creation, are primary and primordial[5]. You have been born from the lotus symbolically present in the heart of the Viraat Purush (Vishnu), or from the lotus-like heart of the supreme authority of the creation[6]. [590] You are the transcendental, supreme mother of the creation[7]. You do not shy away from battle (i.e., you are bold, courageous, valiant and steadfast in war or while facing your enemies who are representatives of the evil, wicked, sinful and pervert forces in this creation; you have the potential and powers to trounce such forces in the battlefield; you are not afraid of battle but literally long for it, love it; it is a game or sport for you, because by playing it you are able to trounce unholiness and unrighteousness in this world, and uphold goodness and righteousness instead)[8] (95).

[1]भ्रान्तिः, [2]प्रभावती, [3]दीप्तिः, [4]पंकजायतलोचना, [5]आद्या, [6]हृत्कमलोद्भूता, [7]परामाता, [8]रणप्रिया

सत्क्रिया गिरिजा नित्यशुद्धा पुष्पनिरन्तरा ।

दुर्गा कात्यायनी चण्डी चर्चिका शान्तविग्रहा (६००)।।९६।।

You are involved in doing righteous deeds[1]. You are called Girija (the daughter of Himwan, the legendary mythological king of the Himalayas; here referring to his daughter Parvati who is the divine consort of Shiva)[2]. You are always eternally modest, immaculate, pure, chaste and uncorrupt[3]. You are known as Pushpa Nirantara (i.e., you are constantly present as the essence of flowers, you are like their nectar and fragrance; you always sit on a flower or hold it in your hand)[4]. You are goddess Durga (the Goddess who rides a lion)[5], Katyayani (another name of Durga; a women belonging to the Kat clan; the wife of sage Katyayan who was a Vedic period

sage; the second wife of sage Yagyawalkya)[6], Chandi (the form that Goddess Durga took when she slayed the demon called Mahisasur)[7], and Charchika (another name of Durga; one who is popular, much talked about and a household deity worshipped by everyone)[8].[600] You have a peaceful, calm, tranquil and serene form or image[9] (96).

[1]सत्क्रिया, [2]गिरिजा, [3]नित्यशुद्धा, [4]पुष्पनिरन्तरा, [5]दुर्गा, [6]कात्यायनी, [7]चण्डी, [8]चर्चिका, [9]शान्तविग्रहा

हिरण्यवर्णा रजनी जगन्मन्त्रप्रवर्तिका ।

मन्दराद्रिनिवासा च शारदा स्वर्णमालिनी ।।९७।।

Your countenance is golden, hence you are known as Hiranya[1], and it resembles the colour of turmeric. Hence you are also known as Rajani. You are dark complexioned like the night (Rajani)[2*]. You are the divine and supreme advisor of the world as well as the one who has created it and inspires it[3]. You reside on the mountain called Mandar (which was used by the Gods and the demons to churn the ocean during the legendary churning to get Amrit, according to legend)[4]. You are known as Sharda (Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of wisdom and learning) and Durga (the Goddess who rides upon a lion and who killed the demon Mahisasur)[5]. You wear a garland made of gold[6] (97).

[1]हिरण्यवर्णा, [2]रजनी, [3]जगन्मन्त्रप्रवर्तिका, [4]मन्दराद्रिनिवासा, [5]शारदा, [6]स्वर्णमालिनी

[Note :- *The word Rajani has two connotations—turmeric and night. There is no contradiction in the two meanings here. As Parvati, the Goddess is known as 'Gauri' or the fair complexioned one, and as 'Mahakali' in the present case in the battlefield of Pushkar, she has a dark complexion. The same Goddess can assume not only these but any other form she wishes to assume. So she can be fair complexioned as well as dark complexioned at the same time.]

रत्नमाला रत्नगर्भा पृथ्वी विश्वप्रमाथिनी (६१०) ।

पद्मासना पद्मनिभा नित्यतुष्टाऽमृतोद्भवा ।।९८।।

You wear a garland made of precious stones and gems[1], and you have made possible the creation of all the precious stones that exist in this world (i.e., all gems and other things of value have been

created by you)[2]. You are Mother Earth personified (because all gems and precious stones are found in earth)[3]. You are the grand mother of the whole creation[4]. [610] You sit in a lotus-like Yoga posture called Padmasan[5]. You are known as Padmanibha or Goddess Laxmi[6]. You are always contented and perpetually happy[7]. The elixir of eternity and bliss called Amrit has had its origin in you (i.e., you have created it yourself)[8] (98).

[1]रत्नमाला, [2]रत्नगर्भा, [3]पृथ्वी, [4]विश्वप्रमाथिनी, [5]पद्मासना, [6]पद्मनिभा, [7]नित्यतुष्टा, [8]ऽमृतोद्भवा

धुवन्ती दुष्प्रकम्पा च सूर्यमाता दृषद्वती ।
महेन्द्रभगिनी माया (६२०) वरेण्यावरदर्पिता ।।९९।।

You are known as Dhuwanti (i.e., you are very diligent in whatever you do; you pursue you target relentlessly and wholeheartedly, you never rest until you have accomplished success in your endeavours; you have perseverance and tenacity)[1]. You make those who are evil, pervert and vile shake, tremble and shiver in fear and awe of you[2]. You are the mother of the Sun (i.e., you are Aditi, the mother of all Gods)[3]. You are the one who empowers the faculty of sight with the vital powers to see (or you make the sun shine)[4]. You are the sister of Mahendra (Indra, the king of Gods)[5]. [620] You are Maya personified (i.e., you represent the delusion creating powers of the supreme Lord —see note to verse no. 35)[6]. You are the most exalted, supreme and revered Goddess who is worthy of praise and honour[7]. You are endowed with all the best of blessings and good fortunes, and you are proud of your glorious virtues[8] (99).

[1]धुवन्ती, [2]दुष्प्रकम्पा, [3]सूर्यमाता, [4]दृषद्वती, [5]महेन्द्रभगिनी, [6]माया, [7]वरेण्या, [8]वरदर्पिता

कल्याणी कमला रामा पंचभूतवरप्रदा ।
वाच्या वरेश्वरी नन्द्या दुर्जया (६३०) दुरतिक्रमा ।।१००।।

Your names are Kalyani (one who gives auspiciousness and welfare and personifies these virtues)[1], Kamla (Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity and one who sits on Kamal, the lotus flower)[2] and Rama (another name of Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu, who is supposed to be very charming and attractive)[3]. You are the one who infuses/injects life and vitality to the 5 basic elements of creation called the Panch Bhuts (which are space, wind, fire, water

and earth), which would have remained inert and inactive without your being infused in them[4]. You are the patron Goddess of speech (i.e., you are Goddess Saraswati as well as the Fire-God personified)[5]. You are the Goddess who gives boons and blessings[6]. You are known as Nandya (Goddess Durga and Parvati; a celestial wish fulfilling cow called Kaamdhenu or Nandini; it also means happiness and joy; an auspicious moment personified; the auspicious numbers 1, 6 and 11. In short, you are personification of all these good virtues)[7]. [630] You are invincible and insurmountable[8], inviolable, impregnable, impenetrable, beyond measure and the one who cannot be fathomed and crossed[9] (100).

[1]कल्याणी, [2]कमला, [3]रामा, [4]पंचभूतवरप्रदा, [5]वाच्या, [6]वरेश्वरी, [7]नन्द्या, [8]दुर्जया, [9]दुरतिक्रमा

कालरात्रिर्महावेगा वीरभद्रहितप्रिया ।
भद्रकाली जगन्माता भक्तानां भद्रदायिनी ।।१०१।।

You are foreboding like the horrible night of doomsday, called Kaalratri[1]. You have great swiftness and agility[2]. You are dear to Virbhadra and take care of his well being and auspiciousness[3]*. You are known as the great, auspiciousness Goddess called Kali (literally, the black Goddess of death)[4]. You are mother of creation[5] and a provider of auspiciousness, happiness and joy to your devotees[6] (101).

[1]कालरात्रि, [2]र्महावेगा, [3]वीरभद्रहितप्रिया, [4]भद्रकाली, [5]जगन्माता, [6]भक्तानां भद्रदायिनी

[Note :- * 'Virbhadra' is one of the followers of Lord Shiva who is regarded as his son and manifestation as well as a great devotee. Therefore, the Goddess, as Parvati who is the divine consort of Shiva, is the dear mother of Virbhadra, and naturally therefore takes care of him and his auspiciousness.]

कराला पिंगलाकारा नामवेदा (६४०) महानदा ।
तपस्विनी यशोदा च यथाध्वपरिवर्तिनी ।।१०२।।

You are formidable, terrifying and awe inspiring[1]. You have a light yellow complexion (i.e., you are wheatish or fair in complexion like Goddess Laxmi)[2]. [640] Your name is honoured by the Vedas[3]. You are like a great river called Maha Nadi (that is, like a great river, you are a great herald of life, a harbinger of fertility and

auspiciousness, the vital force that sustains and nourishes life on earth even as the water of the river supports life on the planet)[4]. You are the one who does Tapa (austerities and penances, observing self-restraint and rigorous righteous vows, and therefore you are aglow with a divine energy emanating from you like radiance from fire)[5]. You have manifested yourself as Yashoda (the mother of Lord Krishna)[6]. You have the potential to bring about a change in even that which is unchangeable, immutable, indivisable and steady as well as uniform[7] (102).

[1]कराला, [2]पिंगलाकारा, [3]नामवेदा, [4]महानदा, [5]तपस्विनी, [6]यशोदा, [7]यथाध्वपरिवर्तिनी

शंखिनी पद्मिनी सांख्या सांख्ययोगप्रवर्तिका ।
चैत्री संवत्सरा (६५०) रुद्रा जगत्सम्पूरणीन्द्रजा ।।१०३।।

You are known as Shankhini (i.e., your voice resembles the resonating, loud and auspicious sound made by a conch called Shankh)[1] and Padmini (an excellent woman who is as beautiful as a Padam or a lotus flower)[2]. You follow the philosophy 'Sankhya Yoga' (a school of Hindu philosophy propounded by sage Kapi— see note to verse no. 118)[3] and are the origin of that philosophy[4]. In the cosmic scale of time and vastness, you are as small as the month of Chaitra (March-April approximately)[5] on the one hand, [650] and a Samvatsar (a year)[6] on the other. You are Rudraa (the divine consort of Rudra, the angry form of Lord Shiva; the word also means very angry, wrathful, vengeful, unrelenting, fierce, awful; the female aspect of cosmos which signifies those characteristics which are basically manly in nature— see also verse no. 83)[7]. You are the creator of the whole world (or the whole creation is your offspring)[8] (103).

[1]शंखिनी, [2]पद्मिनी, [3]सांख्या, [4]सांख्ययोगप्रवर्तिका, [5]चैत्री, [6]संवत्सरा, [7]रुद्रा, [8]जगत्सम्पूरणीन्द्रजा

शुम्भारि: खेचरी खस्था कम्बुग्रीवा कलिप्रिया ।
खरध्वजा खरारूढा (६६०) पराध्यां परमालिनी ।।१०४।।

You are the slayer of demon named Shumbh (i.e., you are a manifestation of Goddess Durga who had killed demon Shumbh)[1]. You are the one who moves in the sky or heavens (i.e., you are a Goddess of the heavens) and are established there[2]. Your neck is like a conch, hence you are also known as Kambu-Griva[3]. [The word Kambu means conch and Griva means neck.] You love to engage the sinful in the battlefield[4]. Your banner (or flag or standard) has the mark of a Khar (literally meaning a hoofed animal, e.g., a mule, a donkey; it also means the bird crow or crane; a type of a plant having thorns)[5]. [660] You are astride a Khar (mule or donkey or a similar hooved animal)[6]. You are independent of others (i.e., you are a sovereign, not under the influence of anyone, are not subjugated by anyone and do not have to serve them)[7]. You are auspicious, immaculate, clean and wise[8] (104).

[1]शुम्भारि:, [2]खेचरी, [3]कम्बुग्रीवा, [4]कलिप्रिया, [5]खरध्वजा, [6]खरारूढा, [7]पराध्यां, [8]परमालिनी

ऐश्वर्यरत्ननिलया विरक्ता गरुडासना ।
जयन्ती हृद्गुहा रम्या सत्त्ववेगा गणाग्रणी: ।।१०५।।

You are treasury of precious jewels representing all those virtues which come under the combined definition of 'Aishwarya' (i.e., those virtues which are marked by the following characteristics — having supremacy, sway, domain, glory, grandeur, majesty, greatness, omnipotence, superhuman powers, divine faculties as well as wealth, fortune, opulence and flourish)[1]. You are Virakta (a renunciate, detached from and dispassionate towards this world; a person who is indifferent to either sorrows and pains or happiness and joys)[2]. You sit astride the Garud (the legendary eagle or heron which is the mount of Lord Vishnu; here referring to Goddess Laxmi who sits along with Vishnu on the Garud)[3]. You are known as Jayanti (one who obtains victory; Goddess Durga or Parvati; the word also means Turmeric)[4]. You reside in the cave-like heart of your devotees[5]. You look pleasant, charming and attractive[6]. Truthfulness and purity are your hallmarks and surging within you (like waves in an ocean of truthfulness and purity)[7]. You are the foremost, superior and prominent amongst all the various diverse manifestations of this creation[8] (105).

[1]ऐश्वर्यरत्ननिलया, [2]विरक्ता, [3]गरुडासना, [4]जयन्ती, [5]हृद्गुहा, [6]रम्या, [7]सत्त्ववेगा, [8]गणाग्रणी:

संकल्पसिद्धा (६७०) साम्यस्था सर्वविज्ञानदायिनी ।
कलिकल्मषहन्त्री च गुह्योपनिषदुत्तमा ।।१०६।।

[670] You successfully accomplish all your wishes and

determinations (i.e., you are unfailing in your efforts and the completion of your enterprises)[1]. You are in a stable, uniform, equanimous, equitable and an equilibrium state of existence which is unequivocal (i.e., it is uniformally and undoubtedly devoid of restlessness and agitation of any kind)[2]. You are a bestower of all knowledge, expertise, erudition, wisdom and scholarship[3]. You are an eliminator of all the faults, blemishes, taints, flaws and shortcomings associated with the present era called Kali (which is the most corrupt of the 4 legendary periods into which one cycle of creation and destruction has been decided in mythology; it is generally the most evil era and is marked by unrighteousness and perversity)[4]. You are an embodiment of the most profound and the most secret tenets, axioms and maxims of the Upanishads which are an excellent repository of Gyan (which is truthful knowledge, wisdom and erudition)[5] (106).

[1]संकल्पसिद्धा, [2]साम्यस्था, [3]सर्वविज्ञानदायिनी, [4]कलिकल्मषहन्त्री, [5]गुह्योपनिषदुत्तमा

नित्यदृष्टि: स्मृतिर्व्याप्ति: पुष्टिस्तुष्टि: (६८०) क्रियावती ।
विश्वामरेश्वरेशाना भुक्तिर्मुक्ति: शिवामृता ।।१०७।।

You have an eternally open eye that sees everything without blinking even once[1]. You have an excellent memory[2]. You are omnipresent, immanent and all-pervading[3]. You are strong, robust, sturdy, youthful and full of vitality and spirit[4]. [680] You are contented and satisfied[5]. You are the one who actually does everything in this world[6]; you are an image of the world[7]. You are the Goddess of the immortal Gods (i.e., even the great Gods also worship you; hence, you are superior to them)[8]. You are the one who enjoys the world (i.e., all the enjoyments and comforts of the world are meant to serve you); hence you are known as Bhukti[9]. You are the personification of Mukti (liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation; that is you are the ultimate shelter for the creatures where they find eternal peace when they are successful in attaining refuge in your holy feet)[10]. [See also verse no. 41, 56 and 115.] You are Shivaa (the divine consort of Lord Shiva; here referring to Parvati)[11]. You are Amrit (the ambrosia of eternity and bliss) personified[12] (107).

[1]नित्यदृष्टि:, [2]स्मृति, [3]व्र्याप्ति, [4]पुष्टि, [5]स्तुष्टि:, [6]क्रियावती, [7]विश्वा, [8]मरेश्वरेशाना,

[9]भुक्ति, [10]र्मुक्ति:, [11]शिवा, [12]मृता

लोहिता सर्वमाता च भीषणा वनमालिनी (६९०)।
अनन्तशयनाऽनाद्या नरनारायणोद्भवा ।।१०८।।

You have a glowing red countenance like that of the planet Mars[1]. You are the divine mother of all[2]. You are terrifying, formidable, abominable and awe inspiring[3]. [690] You are the divine consort of Lord Krishna (Van Mali)[4] You are engrossed in the eternal state of meditative sleep called the 'deep sleep state of consciousness' (which is called Yognidra and marked by bliss and peace, and is the third state of existence of pure consciousness— see also verse no. 45, 65 and 127)[5]. You are without any beginning[6]. You are the divine mother from whom the twin deities called Nar and Narayan* have been born[7] (108).

[1]लोहिता, [2]सर्वमाता, [3]भीषणा, [4]वनमालिनी, [5]अनन्तशयना, [6]ऽनाद्या, [7]नरनारायणोद्भवा

[Note :- *Nar and Narayan were two ancient sages said to be incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The words also mean Krishna and Arjun respectively. In terms of the Upanishads and metaphysics, Nar refers to the macrocosmic Male aspect of creation, called the Viraat Purush, while Narayan is the mythical manifestation of that Viraat Purush as Vishnu, the sustainer of the creation, and from whom Lord Shiva the annihilator and Brahma the creator were born.]

नृसिंही दैत्यमथिनी शंखचक्रगदाधरा ।
संकर्षणसमुत्पत्तिरम्बिकोपातसंश्रया ।।१०९।।

You are the divine and subtle energy and powers of Lord Narsingh (the half man, half lion manifestation of Lord Vishnu to protect his devotee Prahalad from his father Hiranyakshyap's torments)[1]. You are the one who causes the demons and evil ones to be vanquished and trounced; you literally churn them, crush them and make them scatter[2]. You hold a conch, a discus and mace in your hands[3]. Sankarshan* has been born of you[4]. You are known as Ambika (literally, the divine mother)[5]. You reside very near to your devotees (as a doting mother would always like to be near her dear son so that she can extend her protection to him whenever the need arises)[6] (109).

[1]नृसिंही, [2]दैत्यमथिनी, [3]शंखचक्रगदाधरा, [4]संकर्षणसमुत्पत्ति, [5]ऽम्बिको, [6]पातसंश्रया

[Note :- *The word Sankarshan means —the power to pull and attract. It also refers to Balram, the elder brother of Krishna, and also to one of the various communities in Hinduism. That is, you are the mother of Balram and are the creator of the power to attract anything. In fact, you personify that power itself.]

महाज्वाला महामूर्तिः (७००) सुमूर्तिः सर्वकाभधुक् ।
सुप्रभा सुतरां गौरी धर्मकामार्थमोक्षदा ।।११०।।

You are glorious with a divine radiance and stupendous splendour that effuses and radiates from you like a great fire burning fiercely (see also verse no. 78)[1]. [700] You are like a great image of that fire (i.e., your form is glorious, splendorous as well as huge and colossus besides beings stupendous and magnificent in all respects)[2]. This image or form of yours is auspicious and a provider of good luck[3]. It bestows fulfillment of all desires and is ever so helpful and worthy of invocation in times of dire needs[4]. It has an auspicious, excellent and beautiful radiance emanating from it like a divine glow which surrounds you like an effervescent halo from all sides[5]. Hence, your glorious, magnificent and majestic form is also known as Gauri (literally one with a fair complexion; here referring to Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva and considered as the mother of the universe who is most powerful and the primary source of the vibrant, vigorous, stupendous and powerful cosmic energy, — see also verse no. 53)[6].You are a bestower[7] of the 3 legendry fruits (a) Dharma —being righteous, virtuous and noble[8], (b) Kaam —having desires fulfilled and needs satisfied[9], and (c) Moksha —finding liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation[10] (110).

[1]महाज्वाला, [2]महामूर्तिः, [3]सुमूर्तिः, [4]सर्वकाभधुक्, [5]सुप्रभा, [6]सुतरां गौरी, [7]दा, [8]धर्म, [9]कामा, [10]मोक्ष

भ्रूमध्यनिलयाऽपूर्वा प्रधानपुरुषा बली ।
महाविभूतिदा (७१०) मध्या सरोजनयनासना ।।१११।।

You have a divine symbolic presence on the forehead of those who are wise and enlightened, at a point midway between their eyebrows*[1]. You are matchless and without a precedent[2]. You are the chief divine female aspect of creation (who is the counterpart of the divine male aspect called Purush); You are that divine Goddess who is the counterpart of Vishnu, i.e., hence you are Laxmi[3]. [710] You are strong, powerful and potent as well as the prowess, punch and majesty that is the hallmark of the supreme Authority[4]. You can bestow great Vibhuti (the virtues of excellence, dignity, majesty, glory, prosperity, wealth, riches and powers) upon your devotees[5]. You personify Madhya (literally meaning the one who follows the median path which is the opposite of extremes; the moderate aspect of creation having equanimity and evenness; one who is fair, just and equitable; in literature, a lady who has equal amounts of shame and modesty as well as lust and passion in her)[6]. You have lotus-like eyes[7], and when you sit, you do so in a lotus-like meditative posture (called Padmasan in Yoga)[8] (111).

[1]भ्रूमध्यनिलया, [2]ऽपूर्वा, [3]प्रधानपुरुषा, [4]बली, [5]महाविभूतिदा, [6]मध्या, [7]सरोजनयना, [8]आसना

[Note :- *This is the point where the so-called 'eye of wisdom' is located. According to Yoga tradition, this is the site of the Agya Chakra, or the subtle energy center which activates the powers of deep thought and penetrating insight.]

अष्टादशभुजा नाट्या नीलोत्पलदलप्रभा ।
सर्वशक्त्या समारुढा धर्माधर्मानुवर्जिता ।।११२।।

You have 18 arms (as Goddess Durga)[1]. You act your part to perfection[2]. Your radiance and countenance are of the shade of a light blue lotus[3]. You are almighty and omnipotent[4]. You preside over the virtues of strength, powers and potentials (i.e., these are under your command)[5]. You are beyond the purview of 'Dharma and Adharm' (i.e., you remain neutral and neither the good deeds nor the bad deeds have any effect upon you)[6] (112).

[1]अष्टादशभुजा, [2]नाट्या, [3]नीलोत्पलदलप्रभा, [4]सर्वशक्त्या, [5]समारुढा, [6]धर्माधर्मानुवर्जिता

वैराग्यज्ञाननिरता निरालोका (७२०) निरिन्द्रिया ।
विचित्रगहना धीरा शाश्वतस्थानवासिनी ।।११३।।

You are ever engrossed in pursuing Gyan (truthful knowledge and wisdom, having scholarship and expertise in the knowledge contained in the scriptures) as well as observing the principles of

Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion, detachment and indifference to this world and its material objects of comfort which are delusionary and entrapping by nature. Further, you are also not mislead into being haughty and arrogant by thinking that you are an expert and possess Gyan)[1]. [720] You are invisible[2] and don't have a gross body having sense organs[3]. You are adorned by strange ornaments (such as skulls, severed heads, swords etc.) in the battlefield[4]. You are patient, courageous, forbearing and fortitudinous[5]. You dwell in a place (the heaven) which is eternal, everlasting, perpetual and immortal[6] (113).

[1]वैराग्यज्ञाननिरता, [2]निरालोका, [3]निरिन्द्रिया, [4]विचित्रगहना, [5]धीरा, [6]शाश्वतस्थानवासिनी

स्थानेश्वरी निरानन्दा त्रिशूलवरधारिणी ।
अशेषदेवतामूर्तिर्देवतापरदेवता (७३०) ।।११४।।

You are the Lord and unquestioned mistress of the realm (i.e., the entire creation)[1]. You remain in eternal and perpetual bliss which is everlasting[2]. You hold an excellent trident in your hand[3]. [730] You embody all the Gods[4]; you are a personification of all the Gods as well as the supreme, transcendental, sublime and subtle Lord (called Brahm) who is the Lord of all Gods[5] (114).

[1]स्थानेश्वरी, [2]निरानन्दा, [3]त्रिशूलवरधारिणी, [4]अशेषदेवतामूर्ति, [5]देवतापरदेवता

गणात्मिका गिरेः पुत्री निशुम्भविनिपातिनी ।
अवर्णा वर्णरहिता निर्वर्णा बीजसम्भवा ।।११५।।

You are very dear to your devotees[1]. You are the daughter called Giriga or Parvati of the king of mountains called Himvan (see verse nos. 43 and 132 also)[2]. You are the eliminator or crusher or vanquisher of demon Nishumbh[3]. You cannot be described in anyway[4]. You have no restrictions of caste, creed, class, colour and race (or, everyone can worship you and you are the mother of all; you are not limited by such worldly considerations, and neither do you have any preference for any fixed colour or countenance of the skin; all are equal in your eyes, and all have equal right to have your access)[5]. You are the one who gives liberation and deliverance to the soul of the creature (from this mundane, artificial and entrapping world of birth and death— see also verse no. 41 and 107)[6]. It is you who has made it possible for the seeds of a plant to

germinate into a new shoot (i.e., you represent that subtle spark of life inherently present hidden in a seed that helps it to produce a new sprout which is indicative of its powers to create a new life and a new life form— see also verse no. 65)[7] (115).

[1]गणात्मिका, [2]गिरेः पुत्री, [3]निशुम्भविनिपातिनी, [4]अवर्णा, [5]वर्णरहिता, [6]निर्वर्णा, [7]बीजसम्भवा

अनन्तवर्णाऽनन्यस्था शंकरी (७४०) शान्तमानसा ।
अगोत्रा गोमती गोप्त्री गुह्यरूपा गुणान्तरा ।।११६।।

You have limitless colours, hues and countenance indicating that you belong to all the castes, creeds, classes and races in the world[1]. You remain in a state which is unique and complete in all respects; you are intimate to the entity which is endless and infinite (a reference to Brahm)[2]. [740] You are known as Shankari (the divine consort of Lord Shiva, also known as Shankar)[3]. You have a calm, peaceful, tranquil, and serene heart and mind[4]. You do not have any fixed race, clan, linage, caste and creed and neither do you have any relationship with anyone in this mortal world[5]. You have a temperament resembling that of a cow (i.e., you are calm, helping, docile, holy, revered, benevolent and provide nourishment to the world even as the cow gives milk for the benefit of the creatures of this world; the cow also gives dung which is dried into cakes and used as fuel for fire and smeared as a paste to purify the ground; the urine of a cow is also considered holy and has medicinal qualities)[6]. You are a protector of all[7]. You are mysterious and strange[8] as well as beyond all Gunas (attributes, virtues, qualities, characteristic and adjectives that define a person)[9] (116).

[1]अनन्तवर्णा, [2]ऽनन्यस्था, [3]शंकरी, [4]शान्तमानसा, [5]अगोत्रा, [6]गोमती, [7]गोप्त्री, [8]गुह्यरूपा, [9]गुणान्तरा

गोश्रीर्गव्यप्रिया गौरी गणेश्वरनमस्कृता ।
सत्यमात्रा (७५०) सत्यसन्धा त्रिसन्ध्या सन्धिवर्जिता ।।११७।।

You like (or are fond of) products (such as milk, curd, butter and butter milk) produced by the honourable cow[1]. You are Gauri (Parvati, the faire complexioned divine consort of Shiva —see verse nos. 53, 110, 115 also)[2]. Lord Ganesh*, who is himself worshipped, honoured and adored by all the Gods, bows before you to pay his obeisance to you[3]. [750] You are the only truth, are absolutely

truthful and nothing but the truth[4]. You represent the meeting point or the coordinates where all the truths converge[5]. You are an embodiment of the religious sacrament called Sandhya** done 3 times a day —at morning, noon and evening times[6]. At the same time, you do not have any joints or junction points —i.e., you are seamless, smooth, one complete whole which has no beginning and end which would require any soldering or welding together. [See also verse no. 144.] You are unequivocally one, complete, immutable, indivisible and uniform[7] (117).

[1]गोश्रीर्गव्यप्रिया, [2]गौरी, [3]गणेश्वरनमस्कृता, [4]सत्यमात्रा, [5]सत्यसन्धा, [6]त्रिसन्ध्या, [7]सन्धिवर्जिता

[Note :- *Ganesh is also known as Vinayak, the son of Lord Shiva and Parvati. He is said to be the wisest and most honoured of the Hindu Gods and is always worshipped in the beginning of any endeavour or enterprise, whether it pertains to the mundane worldly affairs or to the spiritual realm. This is done to invoke his blessings which preempt any evil forces from throwing a spanner in the wheel of the successful completion of the exercise.

**Sandhya is a sacrament observed by Hindus, and is the ritual done 3 times a day. Basically, it is a form of prayer, and any divine Mantra is chanted while offering oblations to the chosen deity. It is done three times a day —during the morning hours at dawn, during noon and during the evening hours at dusk or twilight. The word 'Sandhi' means a joint, a junction. Hence, the word 'Sandhya' is a ritual done at the junction point of the night and the day, i.e., at dawn; during the junction point of the forenoon and the afternoon, the noon; and during the junction point of the day and the night, at twilight or dusk.]

सर्ववादाश्रया सांख्या सांख्ययोगसमुद्भवा ।
असंख्येयाऽप्रमेयाख्या शून्या शुद्धकुलोद्भवा (७६०) ।।११८।।

You are the repository of all philosophies, all schools of thought, all facts and all the views expressed by the scriptures (i.e., you personify all of them at once; you are an embodiment of all the philosophies and schools of thought, all the facts and views expressed by the scriptures)[1]. You are an eternal abode of all the creatures of creation. You are rationalism personified[2]. Your origin lies in the 'Sankhya Yoga'* (which was propounded and expounded by sage Kapil, and which says that the creation has its origin in the cosmic Purush, the macrocosmic Male, and Shakti, the macrocosmic energy. The union of these two has resulted in the creation of this universe)[3]. You have countless form and virtues[4]. You cannot be wholly and truthfully understood by any of the organs of perception (i.e., they are not competent enough to understand and comprehend you, they cannot fathom your greatness, majesty, glories and divinity)[5]. You are like a void of space, i.e., you are deep, fathomless, measureless, without a beginning and an end, and from where nothing escapes because it is without any boundaries. Further, everything has its origin in space; therefore you represent space because you are the mother of the entire creation which has its origin in you[6]. [760] You have taken birth or have manifested yourself in a noble and uncorrupt clan or family (here referring to king Janak who was the father of Sita, the original form of Goddess Mahakali who is being worshipped here by Sri Ram using 1008 names to honour her)[7] (118).

[1]सर्ववादाश्रया, [2]सांख्या, [3]सांख्ययोगसमुद्भवा, [4]असंख्येया, [5]ऽप्रमेयाख्या, [6]शून्या, [7]शुद्धकुलोद्भवा

[Note :- *Sankhya 'सांख्य' is one of the 6 great schools of Indian philosophy. It was first propounded by sage Kapil. It describes the origin of the cosmos from Brahm who created the macrocosmic first Male called Purush and his female counterpart, the Prakriti (Mother Nature), who are the basic cause of this vast and myriad creation. The individual male and female human beings are the microcosmic forms of that macrocosmic Purush and Prakriti. It is their union which resulted in this cosmos. Their offspring were —Ahankar (pride, ego), Buddhi (intelligence, wisdom, mind), the 5 perceptions (of smell, hearing, touch, taste and sight), forming the subtle body of the creature, the 5 elements (space, wind, fire, water, earth), the 10 sense organs (5 organs of perception—ear, nose, tongue, eye and skin, and 5 organs of action —hand, leg, mouth, anus and genitals), and the mind-

heart complex called the 'Mana', which together formed the gross body of the creature, and the invisible Atma which resides in the causal body. These are the 25 basic constituents of creation. It further postulates that Brahm created Nature (cosmos) because it allowed itself to be covered or mired by the 3 Gunas— 'Sat' meaning righteousness and virtuousness which are the best and noblest of qualities, 'Raj' meaning worldly passions and desires which are the medium or mediocre qualities leading to worldly desires, and 'Tam' meaning evils, sins and other mean mentalities leading to perversions and vices. The Purush, though he remains aloof, still gets shackled or attached to Prakriti, the creation, because of these 3 Gunas which act as ropes or strings that tie him down. Breaking his habits is tantamount to liberation and deliverance from this bondage, and it is called Mukti. The 3 Gunas are the causes of the myriad temperaments, natures, thought patterns and behaviours of all the creatures, because they have all these 3 qualities or virtues in them, though they vary in ratio or proportion. These 3 Gunas are also present in Mother Nature, giving rise to a populace which is so varied and diametrically opposite to each other, even virtually getting at each other's throat, because of the infinite possibilities created by their mixing in different proportions to mould the innate nature, inclinations and temperaments of a creature.

Further, this school of philosophy says that there are 5 elementary Bhuts in this creation —they are the earth, water, fire, wind and space which, in different permutations and combinations, form all the creatures who have a body. A creature, it says, has 11 organs— 5 organs of perception (ears, nose, eyes, tongue and skin), 5 organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, anus and genitals) and 1 organ called the Mana (mind and heart). See also Canto 11, note to verse no. 42 and canto 26, note to verse no. 17. In fact, the entire canto 11 is dedicated to this philosophy of 'Sankhya Shastra'.]

बिन्दुनादसमुत्पत्तिः शम्भुवामा शशिप्रभा ।
विसंगा भेदरहिता मनोज्ञा मधुसूदनी ।।११९।।

You have emerged from the nucleus or the epicenter of the cosmic

sound vibration called Naad* (which is heard by Yogis or ascetics during meditative practices and whose word symbol is OM which is a word used as a synonym for Brahm (see also verse no. 32)[1]. You are the divine consort who sits to the left of Shambhu (Lord Shiva)[2]. [Hindu wife sits on the left of her husband; that is why Parvati, who has manifested herself as Mahakali, is depicted here as sitting to the left of Shambhu.] Your glorious halo is like a radiance which is bright, calm, cool and soothing like that of the moon's light[3]. You prefer to remain alone and secluded, and nothing, no body, accompanies you. [That is, you prefer solitude and serenity.][4] You have no schism, doubts, confusions and differences in you (i.e., you are non dual, one single, immutable and unequivocally without any division or fraction). You are charming and pleasing for the heart and the mind, so much so that they are enthralled and captivated by you[6]. You are the female aspect or the divine energy of Madhusudan (Lord Vishnu; you are a personification respectively of Goddess Laxmi and the divine cosmic energy that sustains and nourishes life in the universe)[7] (119).

[1]बिन्दुनादसमुत्पत्तिः, [2]शम्भुवामा, [3]शशिप्रभा, [4]विसंगा, [5]भेदरहिता, [6]मनोज्ञा, [7]मधुसूदनी

[Note :- The word 'Naad Bindu' is the name of an entire Upanishad belonging to the Rig Veda tradition, an English version of which has been published separately by this humble author. Essentially it states that the cosmic sound in the universe, called Naad, is at the core or Bindu, which literally means a focal point, of the entire creation. It originates in Brahm, which is like that Bindu or point, and spreads out from this focal point like the ripples on the surface of calm waters of a lake when any pebble is thrown in it. This sound is like a cosmic orchestra being played by Brahm. The energy emanating from Brahm takes the form of waves in ether which pervades the entire space of the sky, and these waves produce the sound called Naad. This energy of Brahm is conceptualised as manifesting itself as the great Goddess with whatever name she is known. In our present context, the Goddess is named Mahakali.]

महाश्रीः श्रीसमुत्पत्ति (७७०) स्तमःपारे प्रतिष्ठिता ।

त्रितत्त्वमाता त्रिविधा सुसूक्ष्मपद संश्रया ।।१२०।।

You are great Goddess of prosperity, wealth, fame, glory, majesty and opulence[1]. [770] In fact, this great Goddess known as Sri (or Laxmi) has her origin in you[2]. [That is, the patron Goddess of worldly prosperity and wellbeing, Goddess Laxmi, has her origin in Parvati who is the supreme grandmother Goddess of the entire creation, from whom all the Gods and the Goddesses have emerged or taken birth; you are a personification of that great Goddess.] You are established beyond the reach of 'Tam' which is the negative trait present in creation (leading to all types of evils, sins, perversions, misdemeanours and all sorts of lowly and mean activities. That is, you are beyond anything which is corrupt, unholy, dark and lowly; you are untouched by negative traits)[3]. You are the mother/creator of the 3 essential ingredients which foster life in its gross form —earth, water and fire[4]. You represent a triad of the various aspects of creation*[5]. [See also verse no. 129.] You are subtle and stay in that form (i.e., you are not gross, though some of the aspects of the triad referred to herein above have a mundane, gross connotation as opposed to sublime and spiritual values)[6]. [See also verse nos. 129.] (120)

[1]महाश्रीः, [2]श्रीसमुत्पत्ति, [3]स्तमःपारे प्रतिष्ठिता, [4]त्रितत्त्वमाता, [5]त्रिविधा, [6]सुसूक्ष्मपद संश्रया

[Note :- *The Trividya or the triad of knowledge pertaining to creation has many hues or shades of meanings as follows— (i) It refers to the legendary rewards of righteousness— 'Artha' 'अर्थ' or material well being and prosperity, 'Dharma' 'धर्म' or possessing righteous qualities, being virtuous and noble, and 'Kaam' 'काम' or being successful in fulfilling all desires; (ii) the creation, sustenance and annihilation of creation; (iii) the 3 qualities called 'Sat' 'सत' or noble, 'Raj' 'रज' or mundane and 'Tam' 'तम' or mean and base; (iv) the 3 classes of society —viz. Brahmin or the learned class who are generally teachers and priests, Kshatriyas or the warrior class, and Vaishyas or the trading and farming class; (v) the 3 periods of time —the past, the present and the future; (vi) the 3 states of existence of pure consciousness —the waking state

called 'Jagrat' 'जाग्रत', the dreaming state called 'Swapna' 'स्वप्न', and the deep sleep state of existence called 'Sushupta' 'सुषुप्त' of the creature; (vii) the 3 types of bodies of a creature— (a) the gross body consisting of the 5 organs of perception, e.g., eyes, nose, tongue, ears and skin, as well as the 5 organs of action, e.g., the hand, the leg, the mouth, the anus, and the excretory organs, (b) the subtle body consisting of the mind intellect complex, and (c) the causal body consisting of the pure conscious Atma. (viii) The 'Trividya' is that knowledge which is enshrined in the three Vedas— the Rig, the Sam and the Yajur. This Trividya has been dealt widely in the different Upanishads.See also Canto 3, verse no. 38.]

शान्त्यातीता मलातीता निर्विकारा निराश्रया ।
शिवाख्या चित्रनिलया (७८०) शिवज्ञानस्वरूपिणी ।।१२१।।

You are eternally calm, peaceful and tranquil[1]. You are beyond the reach of all the faults, blemishes, taints and other negative traits and shortcomings[2]. You are attributeless and formless, without any faults and perversions, disorders and deformations which are associated with this artificial, mundane and deceptive world[3]. You do not have, and neither do you need, any shelter or support for your self (because you are self sustaining and self sufficient)[4]. Shiva is one of your appellations; you bring to the fore and notify the glorious fame of Lord Shiva (as the annihilator of this creation) and you are an explanation of how Lord Shiva brings to an end this creation at the time of doomsday (because it is through you, as the divine cosmic energy of the universe, that he brings about the end of this world; the greatest proof of this is your present state as Mahakali). That is why 'Shiva' is affixed to your name, and you are called Shivakhya[5]. [780] You are an abode of the myriad varieties and diverse forms that the creation has taken (i.e., you are an image of this multifarious world with all its charming colours and innumerable variety of creatures)[6]. You are an image and an embodiment of the truthful and eternal Gyan (wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment) which is truthful, holy, beautiful, magnificent and auspicious[7] (121).

[1]शान्त्यातीता, [2]मलातीता, [3]निर्विकारा, [4]निराश्रया, [5]शिवाख्या, [6]चित्रनिलया,

[7]शिवज्ञानस्वरूपिणी

दैत्यदानवनिर्मात्री काश्यपी कालकर्णिका ।
शास्त्रयोनि: क्रियामूर्तिश्चतुर्वर्गप्रदर्शिका ।।१२२।।

You are the one who has created the fierce and formidable ogres, Satans, devils and demons. [No wonder in it, because if the Goddess is the mother of creation, then it naturally follows that she produces everything that constitutes creation, and that includes the bad elements as much as the good ones.][1] You are the divine consort of Kashyap (who is one of the Prajapatis or guardians of creation and was the husband of the 13 daughters of Prajapati Daksha. One of his wives was Aditi, the mother of the Gods. He was the father of both the demons as well as the Gods)[2]. You are known as Kaal Karnika[3]*. You are the divine womb where all the scriptures were symbolically conceived, nourished and had taken shape, and from which they were all born or revealed[4]. You are a shining example, literally an image, of the 'philosophy of doing deeds' (i.e., you do things without getting attached either to the deed/action or the results of that deed/action, i.e., you are dispassionate, detached and indifferent to whatever you have to do because of the demands of time and circumstance)[5], and as such you show the path (by setting an example) of how to do deeds and take actions with dispassion and detachment to all the 4 sections or classes of the society[6]** (122).

[1]दैत्यदानवनिर्मात्री, [2]काश्यपी, [3]कालकर्णिका, [4]शास्त्रयोनि:, [5]क्रियामूर्ति, [6]श्चतुर्वर्गप्रदर्शिका

[Note :- *The word 'Kaal Karnika has two parts— Kaal meaning (a) death, and (b) time and circumstance, while Karnika has many connotations —it literally means (i) the 2nd finger or the middle finger of the hand, (ii) the ornament of the ear, e.g., the ear ring, (iii) the tip of an elephant's trunk, (iv) a cluster of lotus flowers, (v) a pen or writing instrument, (vi) and a stiff stem. Hence, one single word Karnika refers to all these virtues as being symbolically present in the Goddess—such as she is the foremost and most prominent amongst the God, she is not only the creator of Naad, the cosmic sound represented by OM and representing Brahm, but also an adornment or quality of that divine word, she is as sensitive and agile as the tip of an elephant's trunk because the elephant can pick up even a small thing like a needle or a small flower lying on the ground with the tip of its trunk, she is as beautiful, uncorrupt and divine as the lotus flower, not one but an entire cluster, she is wise, scholarly and erudite as a scholarly author symbolised by the writing instrument, and she is unbending, unrelenting, steadfast and rigid in her principles as the stiff branch or the stem of the tree. So, the Goddess is that prominent force of Nature and creation which controls everything.

**The 4 classes or sections into which the society has been classified are the following— (a) Brahmins, who are the senior most and the learned class of people, generally those who are teachers, moral guides and priests, (b) Kshatriyas, who are assigned the task of extending protection to the other 3 classes and to maintain law and order, (c) Vaishyas, who are the trading community taking care of commerce, farming and animal husbandry; their main task is to provide for the comfort and necessities of life of the other 3 classes, and (d) Shudra, who are the service class of people doing the daily routine chores so that their senior brethrens are freed from humdrums of daily life and can divert and concentrate their respective energies to the respective areas of their operation.]

नारायणी नवोद्भूता कौमुदी (७९०) लिंघधारिणी ।
कामुकी ललिता तारा परापरविभूतिदा ।।१२३।।

You are known as Narayani (the divine female aspect of Narayan, Lord Vishnu or the Viraat Purush)[1]. You are always in your pristine, uncorrupt, divine and immaculate form, appearing to be as fresh as a newly born (who is free from any fault associated with this world)[2]. [790] You are known as Kaumudi[3]*. You are also known as Ling Dharini (literally, you have a divine, subtle and ethereal form of a corporeal gross body; you are the subtle Mother Nature personified; you are the divine deity representing the powerful forces of creation as embodied in Lord Shiva's symbol, the 'Ling', and you wear all the virtues and powers that Lord Shiva has)[4]. You are known as

Kamuki (i.e., you personify the virtues of passions, desires, yearnings and worldly lust. In other words, you have a great desire and longing to help your devotees and take care of them, being a doting and a passionate lover of your devotees as their divine mother and as the consort of Lord Shiva who is very kind and magnanimous towards his devotees and worshippers)[5], Lalita (i.e., one who is beloved, handsome, beautiful, charming, attractive, lovely, elegant, sweet, delicate and light)[6], and Tara (a metaphor for anyone who shines and has prominence in his field; literally meaning a star, the pupil of the eye. Here meaning you are the remarkable glory, majesty and magnificence of the world personified; you are the most important, prominent and significant element in creation having the same importance as the pupil of the eye has for a man, for it is the pupil through which the world is illuminated and made visible to the man who would be lost in the former if he were blind)[7]. You bestow divine, auspicious, supreme and most majestic of glories, opulence, sway, dominion, grandeur, greatness, omnipotence, powers and faculties to your devotees (or those who are righteous, noble, virtuous and good in this creation)[8] (123).

[1]नारायणी, [2]नवोद्भूता, [3]कौमुदी, [4]लिंघधारिणी, [5]कामुकी, [6]ललिता, [7]तारा, [8]परापरविभूतिदा

[Note :- * 'Kaumudi' 'कौमुदी' means the light of the full moon, glorious and shining with a bright glow; it also means expounding or elucidation upon some profound philosophy or principle enshrined and propounded in the scriptures. It also refers to the water lily or a red coloured lotus flower which is considered divine, holy, auspicious and beautiful. A slight variation of this word Kaumudi is 'Kaumodi' 'कौमोदी' which means the mace of Lord Vishnu. That is, the Goddess personifies these qualities —she is as soothing and comforting as well as glorious, bright and radiant as the moon light of a full moon against the background of the dark night representing ignorance, delusions and all the miseries and sorrows of this existence; she symbolises happiness, joy, bliss and felicity. The Goddess has the erudition, scholarship and wisdom needed to expound on the knowledge contained in the scriptures. She is as beautiful, divine, auspicious, uncorrupt and holy as the water lily or the red lotus flower. She is like the potential powers, strength, invincible force and great punch represented by the mace of Lord Vishnu.]

परान्तजातमहिमा वाडवा वामलोचना ।
सुभद्रा देवकी (८००) सीता वेदवेदांगपारगा ।।१२४।।

You possess immense and stupendous glories, dignity, grandeur, majesty, importance and greatness which are very remarkable[1]. You are like the fierce and great fire of the ocean bed, called Vadva, which can virtually dry up the ocean and keeps it perpetually warm, helping to sustain the entire marine ecosystem[2]. You are angry, and this anger of yours (against the evil and unrighteous demons who had been tormenting the creatures and have just been slayed by you) is showing in your crooked and vengeful eyes (which are glowing red with anger and spewing fire of wrath, retribution and punishment upon them)[3]. You have manifested yourself as Subhadra (the sister of Lord Krishna)[4], [800] as Deoki (the mother of Lord Krishna)[5], and as Sita (the divine wife of Sri Ram)[6]. You are beyond the reach (comprehension and understanding) of the Vedas and the sub-Vedas called Vedanga (i.e., the scriptures are unable to fathom your greatness and virtues, your grandeur and majesty; you are so remarkable, stupendous, magnificent and fascinating that the scriptures fail to describe you even a fraction of you; they fail to measure you)[7] (124).

[1]परान्तजातमहिमा, [2]वाडवा, [3]वामलोचना, [4]सुभद्रा, [5]देवकी, [6]सीता, [7]वेदवेदांगपारगा

मनस्विनी मन्युमाता महामन्युसमुद्भवा ।
अमृत्युरमृतास्वादा पुरुहूता पुरुप्लुता ।।१२५।।

You are wise, erudite, scholarly, sagacious, adroit and intelligent[1]. You are the mother of Manu* (the first 14 males who were the sons of Brahma, the creator, and the great ancestors from whom the entire human race has descended; also meaning Vishnu, the macrocosmic Viraat Purush of the Upanishads; the mind-intellect complex representing wisdom and intelligence, the power to think and contemplate)[2]. You are very angry and vehement with wrath as Mahakali in the battlefield (against the evil ones, the demons)[3]. You do not die (i.e., you are immortal and cannot be killed or trounced

in the battlefield by your enemies)[4] because you have tasted the ambrosia of eternity called Amrit[5]. You are the Queen of Gods. [The word 'Puruhut' means Indra, the king of Gods. Therefore, since the Goddess is a female, the word 'queen' is most appropriate.][6] You have an invisible, ethereal form (body), and you live in the subtle realm of the heavens[7] (125).

[1]मनस्विनी, [2]मन्युमाता, [3]महामन्युसमुद्भवा, [4]अमृत्यु, [5]मृतास्वादा, [6]पुरुहूता, [7]पुरुप्लुता

[Note :- *The 14 Manus of mythology, who were the forefathers of the entire creation, are the following— (i) Swaayam (स्वायम्), (ii) Swarichosa (स्वारिचोष), (iii) Uttam (उत्तम), (iv) Tamas (तामस), (v) Raiwat (रैवत), (vi) Chakshusha (चाक्षुष), (vii) Vaivaswat (वैवस्वत), (viii) Savarni (सावर्णि), (ix) Daksha Savarni (दक्ष सावर्णि), (x) Brahm Savarni (ब्रह्म सावर्णि), (xi) Dharma Savarni (धर्म सावर्णि), (xii) Rudra Savarni (रुद्र सावर्णि), (xiii) Dev Savarni (देव सावर्णि), and (xiv) Indra Savarni (इन्द्र सावर्णि).]

अशोच्या (८१०) भिन्नविषया हिरण्यरजतप्रिया ।
हिरण्या राजती हैमी हेमाभरण भूषिता ।।१२६।।

[810] You do not have any grief, regret or worries[1]. You can think on different subjects or topics simultaneously. You are different from others; you are an authority that is very different from the rest and you are subject that is distinctly unique and apart[2]. You like gold and silver (i.e., you love the best of virtues and qualities in this creation, represented by these precious metals)[3]. Your divine countenance is glowing like the radiance of gold and silver (which are yellow and white in colour, i.e., you are fair complexioned)[4]. You are adorned by heavy ornaments made of gold (i.e., you have no shortage of worldly riches, and therefore you can give them to your devotes with a free hand)[5] (126).

[1]अशोच्या, [2]भिन्नविषया, [3]हिरण्यरजतप्रिया, [4]हिरण्या राजती हैमी, [5]हेमाभरण भूषिता

विभ्राजमाना दुर्ज्ञेया ज्योतिष्टोमफलप्रदा ।
महानिद्रा (८२०) समुद्भूतिर्बलीन्द्रा सत्यदेवता ।।१२७।।

You are endowed with special auspiciousness, glory, majesty and splendour[1]. You cannot be comprehended or understood, measured or fathomed[2]. You can give the great reward which is obtained by doing the great fire sacrifice known as 'Jyotishtom Yagya'[3]. [820]

You appear to be eternally asleep in the great, eternal sleep called Maha Nidra (i.e., the eternal deep sleep state of consciousness where there is complete bliss; here meaning, you ever remain blissful and oblivious of the turmoil around you in this world. This Maha Nidra is also used by Lord Vishnu while he reclines on the bed made by the legendary Sheshnath on the celestial ocean of milk known as Kshir Sagar— see also verse no. 45 and 108)[4]. The virtues of valour, strength, energy, power, potent, vitality and valiance present in a creature have their origin in you (i.e., all these positive attributes in a creature are because of you and you are the one who inspires and ignites these virtues in him)[5]. You are the supreme Goddess of Truth and Truthfulness[6] (127).

[1]विभ्राजमाना, [2]दुर्ज्ञेया, [3]ज्योतिष्टोमफलप्रदा, [4]महानिद्रा, [5]समुद्भूतिर्बलीन्द्रा, [6]सत्यदेवता

दीर्घा ककुद्यमिनी विद्या शान्तिदा शान्तिवर्द्धिनी ।
लक्ष्म्यादिशक्तिजननी शक्तिचक्रप्रवर्तिका ।।१२८।।

You have virtues and glories which have a broad, large and wide scope and reach; you are a towering figure, most prominent and outstanding amongst your peers; you have a proclaimed and long lasting influence[1]. You are honoured and respected by the epithet Kakudyamini[2]*. You are a personification of knowledge, expertise, skills, erudition and scholarship, collectively known as Vidya[3]. You are one who gives peace, tranquility, serenity and placidity to the creature[4] and enhance these virtues in him[5]. You are the one who produces or creates strengths and powers that come with wealth, prosperity and worldly riches, i.e., you are Goddess Laxmi** personified (because she is the patron Goddess of worldly assets). You are the one who activates the various 'Shakti Chakras'*** or the subtle energy centers present inside the body (and defined by the Upanishads dealing with Yoga)[7] (128).

[1]दीर्घा, [2]ककुद्यमिनी, [3]विद्या, [4]शान्तिदा, [5]शान्तिवर्द्धिनी, [6]लक्ष्म्यादिशक्तिजननी, [7]शक्तिचक्रप्रवर्तिका

[Note :- *The word 'Kakudyamini' is formed from the seed word 'Kukubh' 'कुकुभ' which means that you are at the pinnacle, at the zenith of your glories and fame, you are charming, adorable and auspicious, you are the best of

scriptures and their tenets and the knowledge incorporated in them personified, you are one of the daughters of Prajapati Daksha who is the divine wife of Dharma, the patron God of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness and nobility of thought and action, or these virtues personified, you are like the flowers of the tree called Champa (or *Michelia Chmpaca* which has yellow, fragrant flowers which are used as metaphor for beauty and tenderness); you wear a necklace of these flowers (i.e., you are beautiful and attractive to look at); you are like the tree called Arjun (or *Terminalia Alatagbra*), and you are the one who gives direction to the creatures of the world (i.e., you are the moral preceptor and guide of the world).

**You can empower a man with all the benefits that accrue to him with the acquisition of wealth and riches by setting into motion the 'cycle' of one benefit after another, one glory after another, one virtue followed by another, so that the person reaches the zenith of successes and accomplishments.

***The word 'Chakra' refers to the subtle energy centers present inside the body. According to Yoga texts, when the vital energy trapped in these Chakras are activated, a person acquires immense potentials, including spiritual and mystical powers. In brief, the Chakras and their location and shape are the following— (i) 'Bhug' or 'Brahm Chakra' is triangular in shape and represents the female genital organ; (ii) The 'Mool Kanda' (literally the edible root, tuber root, e.g., radish) is present near the anus, has the shape of a lotus with 4-petals. It is also called 'Kaam' because it is the seat of passion and lust; (iii) The 'Mooladhar Chakra' is located between genitals and anus; (iv) The 'Swadhisthan Chakra' is located in the groins of males and the Bhug area of females. It has a 5-headed male phallus like a sprouting seed and its counterpart in the female is the clitoris; The Chakras 1-4 are related to the sexual reproduction cycle marking the creation of the world. Hence are called 'Kaam' (lust, passion, desire), and are associated with the fire element; (v) The 'Kundalini' is

located between the navel and Swadhisthan Chakra in the upper part of the Moolkand, and it is coil shaped having 8 loops. Its one end blocks the entrance to the Sushumna nerve (Naadi) rising from the base of the spine and going right up to the head. Therefore, we conclude that Kundalini lies dormant at the base of the spine; (vi) The 'Manipur Chakra' is located in the navel area, is shaped like a gem and is surrounded by the network of Naadis (nerves) called solar plexus. It is also the site of the Sun energy; (vii) The 'Anahat Chakra' is located in the chest between the heart and lung area and it is shaped like a swan looking downwards. It is also assumed to be like a 8-petal lotus facing down; (viii) The 'Vishuddha Chakra/Kanth Chakra' is located in the throat. To the left of it passes the Eda nerve representing the moon, to its right goes the Pingla nerve representing the sun, and in the center is the Sushumna nerve through which the Kundalini energy rises up from the base of the spine to the skull; (ix) The 'Talu Chakra' also called Rajdant. It is the route to the 10th door of Brahm. It is located in the palate (back of the mouth); (x) The 'Agya Charka or Bhru Chakra' is located between the eyebrows and root of the nose. It is also called the third eye of enlightenment and wisdom; (xi) The 'Brahm Rahandra Chakra or Sahasrar Charka' is located in the forehead and has the form of a grey cloud or smoke. 'Brahm Randhra' has two connotations— (a) it means 'an opening of fistula', (b) the hair-like spilt in the top of the skull from where the vital wind called 'Pran' makes its exit from the body of a Yogi (ascetic) at the time of his death. For the purpose of Vedanta, the latter is regarded as the 'Brahm Randhra' while for practices of meditation in the initial stages when the 'Apaan Vayu' is required to be diverted from the lower intestine into the 'Kundalini', the former definition of 'Brahm Randhra' is referred to; (xii) The 'Vyom Chakra' is symbolic of the sky and it is shaped like a 10-petal lotus located at the top of the head.]

त्रिशक्तिजननी (८३०) जन्या षड्रूर्मिपरिवर्जिता ।
स्वाहा च कर्मकरिणी युगान्तदलनात्मिका ।।१२९।।

[830] You are the mother (creator) of the 'Triad of Shaktis'[1]*. [See verse nos. 120 also.] You are the one who gives birth (rise) to everything (because you are the divine mother of cosmic creation)[2]. The so-called 6 Urmis** do not effect you at all (or, you are free from their denigrating and demeaning effects and influences)[3]. You are Swaha (the consort of the great Fire-God or you are the Fire-God personified, possessing all the remarkable strengths, powers and characteristics of fire)[4]. You are the vital energy and strength that enables one to do anything (because you are 'Shakti' or energy and vitality)[5]. You are the one who annihilates or concludes everything that exists at the time of the end of the creation (literally, at the end of a Yug or an era which marks the conclusion of one celestial cycle of creation and destruction; the time when the old order passeth and the new one takes over)[6] (129).

[1]त्रिशक्तिजननी, [2]जन्या, [3]षडूर्मिपरिवर्जिता, [4]स्वाहा, [5]कर्मकरिणी, [6]युगान्तदलनात्मिका

[Note :- *The triad of powers and strengths called the Trishaktis that a man possesses are the following— (a) the power to wish and have determination, called Ichha-Shakti, because it is only when one wishes to do anything and has the determination to do so that he actually does anything at all and strives hard to get success in it; (b) the power, strength and empowerment obtained as a result of acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment, sagacity, scholarship and expertise. This is called Gyan Shakti, simply because merely wish and determination wouldn't suffice if a person does not have the required knowledge and skill, the expertise and wisdom to accomplish his objectives successfully, and (c) the actual ability to carryout his plans to their successful completion, i.e., to do deeds, to take actions and enter into enterprise, because simply sitting and procrastinating endlessly wouldn't give success unless there is assiduous activity and diligent effort, no matter how wise a man is and how determined he might be. Besides these three, the following are also called Trishakti or the potential powers present in a man— (a) to have influence, impact, affect and sway upon others, (b) to have enthusiasm, zeal,

flourish, drive and courage, and (c) to have a good advise in this world as well as the support of divine intercession or intervention of Gods who should be benign and favorably inclined towards him. Further, the 3 Goddesses— Kali (the black complexioned goddess of war), Tara (see verse no. 123), and Tripura also known as Tripur Sundari, are also called the Trishaktis, or the divine cosmic energy which has revealed itself in the form of these three divine Goddesses. These Goddesses are the various manifestation of Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva. Parvati is usually referred to by one single epithet— Shakti —which literally means energy, vitality, strength and powers.

**The 6 Urmis are the following— (a) the horrors of birth, (b) the problems of existence, (c) the confusions, restlessness, agitations, bewilderments and various perplexities caused by doubts and opposing thoughts which tear a person apart, (d) the problems of development, (e) decay and (f) destruction and ruin. The word Urmi means —faults, flaws, blemishes, taints, drawbacks and shortcomings in a person's characters and temperaments that are associated with his existence in this mortal world.]

संकर्षणा जगद्धात्री कामयोनिः किरीटिनी ।
ऐनद्री (८४०) त्रैलोक्यनमिता वैष्णवी परमेश्वरी ।।१३०।।

You charm and attract everyone[1]. You are the mother of the world[2]. You represent the female genital organs which ignites passions (which is necessary if the cycle of creation its to continue revolving eternally)[3]. You wear a crown and a tiara (you are like a symbolic crown of the whole creation; it is metaphor to describe your stupendous glories and magnificence, your remarkable fame and virtues that make you the glory of the world)[4]. [840] You are the strength of the various organs that enables a man to perceive and act[5]*. You are revered and honour, adored and worshipped by all the 3 worlds (i.e., the nether world, the mortal or terrestrial world, and the immortal world or the heavens)[6]. You are known as Vaishnavi (Lord Vishnu's devoted consort, Laxmi, who acts as per his wishes; or you are the Shakti of Vishnu personified)[7]. You are the supreme

Goddess called Parmeshwari (even as the supreme God is called Parmeshwar)[8] (130).

[1]संकर्षणा, [2]जगद्धात्री, [3]कामयोनि:, [4]किरीटिनी, [5]ऐनद्री, [6]त्रैलोक्यनमिता, [7]वैष्णवी, [8]परमेश्वरी

> [Note :- *There are 5 organs of perception —eyes which see, ears which hear, nose which smells and breathes, tongue which tastes and speaks, and skin which feels and encloses the body from the outside like a sac cloth. The 5 organs of action are the hands, the legs, the mouth, the anus and the genitals organs, which pertain to the 5 activities of doing anything, moving, eating and speaking, excretion and reproduction respectively.]

प्रद्युम्नदयिता दान्ता युग्मदृष्टिस्त्रिलोचना ।
महोत्कटा: हंसगति: प्रचण्डा (८५०) चण्डविक्रमा ।।१३१।।

You are the one who empowers a man with passions and desires to procreate[1]. [The word 'Pradumna' refers to the patron God of love, called Kamdeo cupid, hence the interpretation.] You are magnanimous, gracious, generous and benevolent (when it comes to giving away largesse in the form of mercy and blessings)[2]. You represent the dual view of the world (as a Purush, the cosmic Male, as well as Shakti, the cosmic Female)[3]. You are said to possess three eyes (viz., two ordinary eyes and the third subtle eye of wisdom located at the tri-junction of the eyebrows and the root of the nose); hence one of your names is Trilochana[4]. [See also verse no. 111, word no. 1 in this context.] You possess the virtues of having great eagerness, keenness and intensity as well as being earnest, keen and fervent in whatsoever you pursue or desire to have[5]. Your gait and demeanours are as majestic, elegant and graceful as that of the bird Swan[6]. [850] You are reputed to be fierce, furious, uncompromising, unrelenting, vigorous and energetic in whatever you do[7]. Your potentials, valour, punch, strength, courage, might, prowess and heroism are very effective and sharp, incisive and severe like the fierce Chandi, the great Goddess representing wrath, anger, revenge, retribution and vehemence[8] (131).

[1]प्रद्युम्नदयिता, [2]दान्ता, [3]युग्मदृष्टि, [4]स्त्रिलोचना, [5]महोत्कटा:, [6]हंसगति:, [7]प्रचण्डा, [8]चण्डविक्रमा

वृषावेशा वियन्मात्रा विन्ध्यपर्वतवासिनी ।
हिमवन्मेरुनिलया कैलासगिरिवासिनी ।।१३२।।

You are the energy, the potent, the prowess, the vitality and the strength inherently present in a bull[1]. Your dimensions are like that of sky (i.e., you are measureless, fathomless, endless, without any boundary, are eternal and infinite)[2]. You have your divine abode in the holy Vindyachal Mountains (and worshipped there as Goddess Vindyavasini)[3]. You also have your divine and auspicious dwelling in the Himalayas (in the mythological household of Himvan, the legendary king of the snow capped mountain range, as his daughter named Girija, literally 'the one who is born of Giri' or a mountain— see also verse no. 43 and 115) as well as in Mt. Meru (where according to Purans, the Gods resides; the word also means 'gold')[4]. Besides these, Mt. Kailash (the abode of Lord Shiva, present on the northern banks of lake Mansarovar and located in Tibet) is also one of your mythical divine abodes (because you are Shiva's consort)[5] (132).

[1]वृषावेशा, [2]वियन्मात्रा, [3]विन्ध्यपर्वतवासिनी, [4]हिमवन्मेरुनिलया, [5]कैलासगिरिवासिनी

चाणूरहन्त्री तनया नीतिज्ञा कामरूपिणी (८६०)।
वेदविद्या व्रतरता धर्मशीलाऽनिलाशना ।।१३३।।

You are the slayer of demon named Chanur[1]. You are known as Tanaya (literally meaning a young daughter— see verse no. 28 also)[2]. You are well-versed and expert in Niti (ethics, morality, code of conduct and behaviour, the tenets or principles as laid down in the scriptures)[3]. [860] You are a personification of Kaam (representing passion, lust, desire as well as deeds and activities pertaining to this world— see also verse no. 130)[4]. You are very steadfast, diligent, persistent and persevering in following the righteous path shown by the Vedas, as well as are engrossed in studying, understanding, contemplating upon and implementing that knowledge and wisdom (for the welfare of the creation— see also verse nos. 89 and 90)[5]. You follow the path of Dharma which is righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, virtuousness and nobility personified[6]. [See also verse nos. 148-150.] Wind or air is your staple diet (because wind is the vital life giving force in creation

and it sustains life in a creature. In other words, you are 'life and vitality' personified; you embody wind or air which is the life giving vital force of creation[7] (133).

[1]चाणूरहन्त्री, [2]तनया, [3]नीतिज्ञा, [4]कामरूपिणी, [5]वेदविद्या व्रतरता, [6]धर्मशीला, [7]ऽनिलाशना

[Note :- The 4[th] word 'Kaam' also means that you are very beautiful and charming because Kamdeo-cupid, the patron God of Kaam which is a word representing lust, passion and desire, is considered to be the most beautiful being in creation. Kaam is usually used has a metaphor for beauty , passion and desires.]

अयोध्यानिलया वीरा महाकालसमुद्भवा ।
विद्याधरक्रिया सिद्धा विद्याधरनिराकृतिः ।।१३४।।

You are a resident of Ayodhya (as Sita)[1]. You are brave, valiant, strong, courageous, heroic, bold, daring, mighty and eminent[2]. You are the creator of Maha Kaal (the great God of death)[3]. You act most wisely and sagaciously, because you are adroit and enlightened like those who are known as Vidyadhars (i.e., those who are experts in any filed of knowledge)[4]. You have mystical powers, are accomplished, successful and fulfilled[5]. You are formless, attributeless and subtle like the Vidyadhars[6*] (134).

[1]अयोध्यानिलया, [2]वीरा, [3]महाकालसमुद्भवा, [4]विद्याधरक्रिया, [5]सिद्धा, [6]विद्याधरनिराकृतिः

[Note :-* The Vidyadhars are a type of demi-God who are midway in heavenly hierarchy, standing between the Gods on the one hand and the other junior Gods such as the Gandharvas, the celestial musicians, and the Kinnars, the celestial singers and dancers on the other. Vidyadhars are those spirits which are wise and enlightened amongst their peers who are on the threshold of becoming Gods, but they could not do so because they had some shortcomings which prevented them from acquiring the highest stature of becoming a God. So they are regarded as senior in the hierarchy of heavenly system of Gods.]

आप्यायन्ती (८७०) वहन्ती च पावनी पोषणी खिला ।
मातृका मन्मथोद्भूता वारिजा वाहनप्रिया ।।१३५।।

[870] You are a provider of a contentedness and satisfaction[1]. You are tolerant and bear everything with fortitude, patience, equanimity

and courage[2]. You are auspicious, pure, pristine, sacred and holy[3]. You are the sustainer, the nourisher and the care taker of all[4]. You are like the roasted rice grain which is a light and staple food for the poor masses. [Rice grain is a metaphor for the Goddess' virtue of providing sustenance and basic nourishment to her subjects, because rice is one the staple foods of India.][5] You are the holy and divine mother[6] from whom Kamdeo-cupid has been born[7]. You are produced or you have appeared from the water element (a reference to Goddess Laxmi who was deemed to have been born from the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the demons using Mt. Madrachal as the churning rod and Sheshnath, the legendry python, as the rope during the mythical efforts made by the Gods and the demons to get Amrit, the legendary ambrosia of eternity and bliss)[8]. You love to ride (instead of walking on foot)[9] (135).

[1]आप्यायन्ती, [2]वहन्ती, [3]पावनी, [4]पोषणी, [5]खिला, [6]मातृका, [7]मन्मथोद्भूता, [8]वारिजा, [9]वाहनप्रिया

करीषिणी स्वधा वाणी (८८०) वीणावादनतत्परा ।
सेविता सेविका सेवा सिनीवाली गरुत्मती ।।१३६।।

You are like Karishini (the dried dung found in forests and which is used by forest dwellers as fuel for their fire). [That is, you are the Goddess that energises the fire of the hearth and lends your potential powers to produce heat and energy in it. This fire is very necessary to cook food. So indirectly you help a man to prepare food for his sustenance. You are the basic ingredient of the fire element, i.e., you are its energy, heat, vitality and light; there will be no energy, no vitality, no heat and no light in this creation if you were not innately and subtly present in the fire element.][1] You are Swadha (literally, the food offered to the dead ancestors or Gods to sustain them; the word also refers to one of the daughters of Prajapati Daksha). [That is, you sustain not only the Gods but also the dead ancestors of the human race. Similarly, you are a manifestation of the divine daughter of Daksha who is revered by all.][2] [880] You are a personification of the faculty of speech (i.e., you are the vital force that enables a person to speak properly and acquire fame and renown because of his ability to speak with erudition, coherence,

articulation and wisdom; you enable and empower a person to speak because, as the fire and wind elements, you are the patron Goddess of speech represented by the Fire-God, the vital wind called Pran or breath, as well as Goddess Saraswati, who is the patron Goddess of speech and learning)[3]. You are eager and keen to play the Indian lute (because Goddess Saraswati, of whom you are a manifestation, is also very fond of playing it)[4]. You are being served by all the creatures[5], and at the same time you serve all (as their divine and holy mother)[6]. In fact, you are an embodiment of service and dedication; you exemplify exemplary and dedicated virtue of service[7]. You are Siniwali (a Vedic period Goddess; a metaphor for the moon on the first day of its bright fortnight)[8]. You are serious, somber and grave; you have profound wisdom and intelligence[9] (136).

[1]करीषिणी, [2]स्वधा, [3]वाणी, [4]वीणावादनतत्परा, [5]सेविता, [6]सेविका, [7]सेवा, [8]सिनीवाली, [9]गरुत्मती

अरुन्धती हिरण्याक्षी मणिदा श्रीवसुप्रदा (८९०) ।
वसुमती वसोर्धारा वसुन्धरा समुद्भवा ।।१३७।।

You are like Arundhati (the revered and holy wife of sage Vashistha who was the son of the creator Brahma and the moral preceptor and the royal priest of the clan in which Sri Ram was born, i.e., the Goddess is as honorable and revered as Arundhati)[1]. You are known as Hiranyakshi[2]*. You liberally bestow wealth and worldly riches symbolised by giving away liberal quantities of Mani (precious gems) as largesse to your devotees and followers[3]. [890] You give the boon of, or you bless and bestow 'Sri' and 'Vasu' to all who are your devotees and are righteous and virtuous[4]**. You are known as Vasumati (literally meaning equivalent to, similar to, synonymous with and the one who possess the different Vasus)[5], Vasordhara (literally meaning one where the various Vasus flow continuously in an uninterrupted stream or in a continuous supply)[6], and Vasundhara (literally meaning the earth where all the Vasus are kept; a vessel, a container, a habitat, a dwelling place, a foundation, a storage place, a treasury for all the different Vasus)[7]. It is from you that all the different Vasus have emerged or have been produced or created[8]*** (137).

[1]अरुन्धती, [2]हिरण्याक्षी, [3]मणिदा, [4]श्रीवसुप्रदा, [5]वसुमती, [6]वसोर्धारा, [7]वसुन्धरा, [8]समुद्भवा

[Note :- *The word 'Hiranyakshi' 'हिरण्याक्षी' has many connotations. It refers to the Goddess whose eyes are literally 'golden', but it is a metaphor for her being benevolent, merciful and benign; her eyes are a treasury of Amrit which is the ambrosia of bliss and eternity as well as peace and happiness. The word means one who provides material well being represented by the precious metal gold and happiness that accrues with worldly comforts. At the same time, she is the Goddess who had slayed the demon Hiranya Kashipu in her manifestation as Goddess Durga; hence her eyes are most fierce and stern, symbolising her valour, potent, vitality, strength and courage. The word also refers to greenery; hence the Goddess is a symbol of fertility and worldly prosperity. Her eyes shower benevolence and fertility as ambrosia dripping upon her devotees through her eyes. They represent the kind and merciful eyes of a loving, caring and doting mother who loves her children; by looking at her merciful eyes, the creature feel very comfortable, reassured and happy.

**The words 'Sri' 'श्री' and 'Vasu' 'वसु'go hand in hand. 'Sri' means worldly prosperity, wealth, opulence, majesty, grandeur, riches, successes, accomplishments, honours, respect, fame, renown and splendour etc.. The word 'Vasu' refers to the God who has 8 subordinates under him who are the patron Gods of fire, water, wealth, gold and gems. The word also refers to Shiva, Vishnu, the Sun and its rays as well as saintly and pious people. In short, all the good, righteous and virtuous things in creation with their respective patron Gods are included in this word. Hence, the Goddess represents all those virtues covered by the words 'Sri' and 'Vasu', and she has the power to bless one with them or empower her devotees to acquire these assets and virtues.

***The words Vasumati 'वसुमति', Vasordhara 'वसोर्धारा' and Vasundhara 'वसुन्धरा' refer to Mother Earth because the earth possess all wealth represented by the different 'Vasus'; she gives them liberally and magnanimously to all the creatures dependent upon her, without complaining in any way; she

possesses the different Vasus in abundance; she is the huge, an almost inexhaustible receptacle or a treasury of them; they continuously flow in her bowels and come out in an uninterrupted supply to benefit all the creatures; and it is in her that the Vasus have not only found their habitats by also owe their emergence and existence itself to her (Mother Earth). That is why also the Goddess is treated as being synonymous with and an image of as well as a manifestation of Mother Earth.]

वरारोहा वरार्हा च वपु:संगसमुद्भवा ।
श्रीफली श्रीमती श्रीशा श्रीनिवासा (९००) हरिप्रिया ।।१३८।।

You have an auspicious, pleasing, charming, benevolent and pleasant face[1]. You posses the best of virtues, attributes, characteristics and qualities[2]. You have been produced as a conjugal relationship or union of two bodies (i.e., you represent that vital force or Shakti that was produced as a union of the Viraat Purush and Mother Nature). You are honoured with the title of Srifali[4]*. You are also known as Srimati (an honorable lady)[5], Srishaa[6]**, [900] Srinivas[7]***, and Hari Priya (one who is very dear to Hari or Lord Vishnu; hence the word also refers to Goddess Laxmi)[8] (138).

[1]वरारोहा, [2]वरार्हा, [3]वपु:संगसमुद्भवा, [4]श्रीफली, [5]श्रीमती, [6]श्रीशा, [7]श्रीनिवासा, [8]हरिप्रिया

[Note :- *The word Srifali means— (i) a coconut, (ii) Indian goose berry or *Phyllanthus Embelica*, (iii) Indian Jujube or *Zizyphus Jujuba* —all these are considered auspicious fruits in Indian mythology, i.e., the Goddess is as auspicious as these fruits called Srifali.

**The word Srishaa refers to the divine female aspect of Lord Vishnu, known as Srisha or the supreme and most exalted one, a sovereign. Here, the word is a reference to Goddess Laxmi who is like the crown jewel of creation because she represents wealth and prosperity without which ordinary life would be difficult to sustain.

***The word Srinivas has two connotations— (i) the honorable and revered abode where 'Sri', which literally means glory and majesty, pomp and pageantry, wealth and prosperity, magnificence and grandeur etc. have their abodes,

or one who is a treasury of these virtues; (ii) the abode where Lord Vishnu resides; here meaning the heart of Goddess Laxmi which is the abode of Vishnu.]

श्रीधरी श्रीकरी कम्पा श्रीधरा ईशवीरणी ।
अनन्तदृष्टिरक्षुद्रा धात्रीशा धनदप्रिया (९१०) ।।१३९।।

You are the female aspect of Vishnu, the sustainer and nourisher of the creation; you are the incarnation of his divine consort Laxmi who represents wealth which is very necessary for sustenance of life in this world[1]. You are the one who provides auspicious and welfare, and mark the beginning of any enterprise or endeavour. [In other words, you are that spark that initiates all initiatives, all activities, all deeds and actions, all enterprises and endeavours. You give success and accomplishment in all efforts; you bestow majesty, grandeur, significance and fame; you are the one who gives opulence, prosperity, riches and wealth.][2] You are known as Kampa[3]*. You bear or possess all the virtues associated with the word 'Sri' (see verse no. 137 and 138 —such as opulence, wealth, prosperity, pomp, majesty, grandeur, magnificence, fame, splendour, glory, fortune, honour, respect etc.)[4]. You are the great Goddess who is most strong, brave, courageous, valiant, potent and powerful[5]. You have an infinitely deep and penetrating insight into everything; nothing is concealed from you[6]. You are the protector of even the humblest, the most downtrodden underdogs[7]. You are the mother, protector, sustainer, well wisher and nourisher of all[8]. [910] You are the dear consort of the Lord of wealth (here meaning Lord Vishnu's divine consort Laxmi as well as the consort of Kuber who is the God's tressurer)[9] (139).

[1]श्रीधरी, [2]श्रीकरी, [3]कम्पा, [4]श्रीधरा, [5]ईशवीरणी, [6]अनन्तदृष्टि, [7]रक्षुद्रा, [8]धात्रीशा, [9]धनदप्रिया

[Note :- *The third word Kampa 'कम्पा' literally means a bird catcher's snare. By using this word while talking about Sri, the implied meaning is that worldly opulence, wealth, prosperity, fame, grandeur and honour are like traps for a creature and they prevent his emancipation and salvation, his liberation and deliverance from this mundane world even as a bird catcher uses the snare called Kampa to trap fowl.]

निहन्त्री दैत्यसिंहानां सिंहिका सिंहवाहिनी ।
सुसेना चन्द्रनिलया सुकीर्तिश्छिन्नसंशया ।।१४०।।

You are the slayer and eliminator[1] of great, fierce and ferocious demons who are comparable to lions amongst animals[2]. You are like a lioness yourself (i.e., you are ferocious, fierce, fearless, potent, powerful, energetic, majestic, strong, grand, awe inspiring and the Lord and mistress of the entire creation even as a lioness is the ruling queen of the animal kingdom)[3]. You ride a lion (in your manifestation as Goddess Durga)[4]. You have a beautiful (strong, invincible, disciplined, powerful, potent and well armed) army[5]. Your divine abode is in the moon (which is metaphor for beauty, peace, love and enchantment; it is a treasury of Amrit which is the ambrosia for eternity and bliss; it is an ornament of Lord Shiva because a crescent moon is tucked in a matted lock of hairs on his head)[6]. You have a majestic glory and magnificent form[7]. You have no doubts, consternations, confusions, perplexities, confoundedness and bewilderments of any kind in you (i.e., you are free from these negative traits), and there is no doubt about it[8] (140).

[1]निहन्त्री, [2]दैत्यसिंहानां, [3]सिंहिका, [4]सिंहवाहिनी, [5]सुसेना, [6]चन्द्रनिलया, [7]सुकीर्ति, [8]श्छिन्नसंशया

बलज्ञा बलदा वामा (९२०) लेलिहानाऽमृताश्रवा ।
नित्योदिता स्वयंज्योतिरुत्सुकामृतजीविनी ।।१४१।।

You know the importance, significance and meaning of the virtues of courage, valour, strength, power and potentials[1]. At the same time, you are the one who bestows these virtues on your devotees as well as the ones whom you are pleased with, such as those people who are righteous and virtuous. In other words, these virtues can be acquired by your grace[2]. [920] You are known as Vama (because you are aggressive, have an unconventional form and an angry and wrathful countenance and demeanours, you are viciously opposed to others in the battlefield, such as your enemies or those who are evil, pervert and sinful by showing them your formidably cruel and ferocious form which is not usual for a divine Goddess and a loving mother, but you have assumed this unconventional form in order to help your devotees and good creatures in this world by getting rid of the evil ones)[3]. As Mahakali, the great ferocious patron Goddess of war and destruction, you have a lapping tongue (which is soaked in blood and protruding out from your open, horrifying mouth)[4]. [That is why the adjective Vama in serial no. 2 of this verse has been used to describe the Goddess.] But while you are thirsty for blood of your enemies who are evil ones and represented by the demons, for your devotees and those who are noble, good, virtuous and righteous, your tongue drips of Amrit (the ambrosia of peace and bliss)[5]. You are immortal, eternal and everlasting[6]. You are self illuminated[7]. You are ever eager for the welfare of others[8]. You are the one who can infuse a new breath of life in those who are already dead; you represent the elixir of eternity called Amrit which makes even the Gods immortal. That is, you personify Amrit[9] (141).

[1]बलज्ञा, [2]बलदा, [4]वामा, [4]लेलिहाना, [5]ऽमृताश्रवा, [6]नित्योदिता, [7]स्वयंज्योति, [8]उत्सुका, [9]ऽमृतजीविनी

वज्रदंष्ट्रा वज्रजिह्वा वैदेही वज्रविग्रहा (९३०) ।
मंगल्या मंगला माला मलिना मलहारिणी ।।१४२।।

Your teeth and jaws are strong like the Bajra (which is a weapon of Indra and is made of the strongest, hardest, most sturdy, powerful and potent material in existence such as the diamond, and as such it is considered invincible)[1]. Similarly, your tongue is also as powerful, potent and effective as Bajra[2]. You are also known as Vaidehi (literally the daughter of king Videha, or king Janak; that is, you are Sita in the form of Mahakali)[3]. [930] Your body, your form is also as strong, powerful and robust as Bajra[4]. You are an abode of auspiciousness and goodness[5]. You are auspicious and noble, holy and divine[6]. You are like the holy rosary or a magnificent garland called Mala[7]*. You are dark complexioned and apparently very unconventional, uncouth and unholy to look at (because of your present war-scarred, blood soaked, naked, ferociously fierce, vehemently wrathful, vengeful, scowling and awful form in the battlefield)[8]. But it must be remembered that you are, at the same time, the one who eliminates these negative traits called the various Muls (flaws, faults, shortcomings, taints, blemishes, scars and all sorts of negative characteristics present in a creature leading to

sinfulness, perversions, evil and unrighteousness)[9] (142).

[1]वज्रदंष्ट्रा, [2]वज्रजिह्वा, [3]वैदेही, [4]वज्रविग्रहा, [5]मंगल्या, [6]मंगला, [7]माला, [8]मलिना, [9]मलहारिणी

[Note :- *The 7th word Mala literally means a rosary, a garland or a necklace. In different contexts, it acquires different meanings— (i) you have a chain of virtues in you like the beads of a rosary or garland, (ii) You, as Mahakali, are bearing a most unholy garland around your neck because you are wearing skulls and severed heads of demons threaded together in their intestines, (iii) you, as the divine Goddess, are an auspicious provider of auspiciousness, and you are wearing an auspicious garland, because you are the great Goddess of creation, (iv) though you are auspicious yourself, the garland of skulls and severed heads that you wear is inauspicious.]

गान्धर्वी गारुडी चान्द्री कम्बलाश्वतरप्रिया ।
सौदामिनी (९४०) जनानन्दा भ्रुकुटीकुटिलानना ।।१४३।।

You are a personification or symbolic of a female Gandharva (who are demi-Gods and celestial musicians)[1]. You ride upon a Garud (the legendary eagle or heron who is the mount of Lord Vishnu)[2]. You are a personification of the beautiful moonlight; the glory, brightness, charm and beauty of the Moon personified[3]. You are known as Kambal (a synonym for Laxmi or Kamla, the Goddess of wealth who sits on a lotus flower and holds one in her hands; she is the divine consort of Vishnu)[4]. You are the beloved of Ashwatar (the king of serpents, literally 'the seahorse'; you are type of Gandharva, the demi-God who has the face like that of a horse)[5]. [940] You are like Saudamini (literally meaning electric or lightening having auspicious and beneficial energy)[6]. You give happiness and joys to your subjects (i.e., the creatures of the world)[7]. Your eyebrows are so crooked and curved that they give your face a cruel and fearfully scowling appearance; it appears evil and wicked, inspiring awe and fears in the heart of those who look at you[8], especially your enemies who are evil and sinful ones (143).

[1]गान्धर्वी, [2]गारुडी, [3]चान्द्री, [4]कम्बला, [5]श्वतरप्रिया, [6]सौदामिनी, [7]जनानन्दा, [8]भ्रुकुटीकुटिलानना

कर्णिकारका कक्षा कंसप्राणापहारिणी ।
युगन्धरा युगावर्त्ता त्रिसन्ध्याहर्षवर्धिणी ।।१४४।।

Your hands (palms) are broad like the leaves of the plant known as Karnikar (or Kanak Champa— *Pterospermum Acerifolium*; the leaves of this plant are very wide at the end of a thin stem, representing the hands of the Goddess)[1]. You are known as Kaksha (i.e., you are the outer perimeter or the circumference of the entire wheel of creation; you envelop and enclose everything; nothing exists beyond you; nothing can transgress your authority and dictate)[2]. You are that divine Goddess who had brought to an end the life of Kansha (who was killed by Lord Krishna. That is, you are that vital, potent and subtle energy, the divine force and the hidden potentials that had enabled Krishna to subdue and kill the monster-like uncle of his, named Kansha, who was much stronger than him in physical strength and prowess)[3]. You are known as Yugandhara[4] as well as Ygawarta[5] because you bring to an end a particular era or a long period of time in the cycle of creation, and at the same time you make the 4 Yugs —Sat, Treta, Dwapar and Kali Yugs — turn around in a cycle rotating endlessly, one Yug following another, and make all the Yugs recur endlessly. You represent the so-called 'Sandhya points' (the 3 times of a day when two periods of time meet each other—the 'dawn' when the night time meets the daytime, the 'noon' when the forenoon hours meets the afternoon hours, and 'dusk' or twilight when the daytime meets the night time; it also refers to the 3 sacramental prayers called 'Sandhya' offered at these point of time during the course of the day— see also verse no. 117)[6]. You are an enhancer of thrill, cheerfulness, happiness and exhilaration[7] in the heart of devotees (144).

[1]कर्णिकारका, [2]कक्षा, [3]कंसप्राणापहारिणी, [4]युगन्धरा, [5]युगावर्त्ता, [6]त्रिसन्ध्या, [7]हर्षवर्धिणी

[Note :- The 4th, 5th and 6th words, when read together, means — 'You are that vital and supreme authority, force, power and energy that brings an end to a particular phase in life, be it a civilisation, be it the different phases in the life of an individual, be it the cycle of good and bad, sorrows and miseries as well as happiness and joy, be it construction and destruction etc.. Meanwhile, you also ensure that the wheel of creation continues to rotate smoothly, without hindrance and faltering in the least —you keep the wheel of time turning

ceaselessly. The analogue of the Sun can be used here to explain this concept —you create the dawn which is the end of the dark night and the beginning of new day; you create the noon which marks the junction point of the rising and setting phases of the sun's journey across the sky, because it is at its zenith at the central point of the hemisphere of the sky; you create the dusk which marks the meeting point of the day and the night. You are the force that joined them seamlessly and ensure that the transition from one phase to another is smooth.

In other words, you are that divine mother who can bestow, as your grace, the boon of peaceful transition of a creature from this world to another; you can ensure his liberation and deliverance without much effort and see to it that he gets emancipation and ultimate salvation. This transition will be very smooth as the movement of the sun across the sky is also very smooth and unaffected by all other natural phenomenons occurring in this world. This is a way of saying that none of the problems associated with this world will come in the way of liberation and deliverance of your devotees or on those upon whom you are kind and benevolent.]

प्रत्यक्षदेवता (९५०) दिव्या दिव्यगन्धा दिवापरा ।
शक्रासनगता शाक्री साध्वी नारी शवासना ।।१४५।।

[950] You are the divine Godhead that is there to be clearly seen, witnessed, experienced; it is obvious, evident, tangible and cognisable[1]. You are holy, divine, glorious, grandiose, magnificent and majestic[2]. A pleasant and sweet aroma pervades everywhere where you are present. That is, you give out a sweet and pleasant fragrance symbolising your holiness, divinity, purity, auspiciousness and blissful state of existence which makes those who are near you witness and experience these virtues themselves[3]. You are the glorious and supreme Goddess known as Diva (meaning the Day; Goddess Uma or Parvati or Gauri)[4]. You symbolically sit upon the throne or seat of Indra (the king of Gods). [That is, you exercise the same authority which Indra has over the Gods and the rest of the creation as the King. In fact, you have authorised Indra to be a

King and carry out his duties as the king of Gods. But the supreme authority who has delegated its powers to Indra is you.][5] In fact, you are the very empowerment of Indra; you are the vital strength, powers, prowess, authority, sway, the stupendous majesty and glory that he possesses; you embody these virtues in you. [That is, you are not only the supreme delegating authority for the powers and strengths that Indra possesses, but you also are those powers and strengths themselves. It is you who subtly, imperceptibly, intangibly and in a behind-the-curtain manner enables Indra to carry out his designated duties as the king of Gods and creation)[6]. You are holy, pious, uncorrupt, immaculate and a 'Divine[7] Lady' or the female aspect of creation[8]. You sit atop a dead body[9]* (145).

[1]प्रत्यक्षदेवता, [2]दिव्या, [3]दिव्यगन्धा, [4]दिवापरा, [5]शक्रासनगता, [6]शाक्री, [7]साध्वी, [8]नारी, [9]शवासना

[Note :- *The last word Shavasana 'शवासना' has two parts—'Shav' meaning a corpse, and 'Aasan' meaning to sit. This word refers to the Mahakali form of the Goddess as she appears in the battlefield of Pushkar after killing the thousand-headed Ravana. The previous Canto has described the horrifying scene of the battlefield, littered with dead corpses and the Goddess, along with her companions, playing around with the skulls of dead demons as if they were balls, kicking their bodies, ripping out their intestines, making a garland out of them and drinking their blood. While running around madly in anger here and there, she would naturally step on cadavers scattered on the battlefield. When she wished to rest, she would sit on one of the dead bodies. A proof that she did so comes in Canto 13, verse no. 69-70 wherein it is said that when the earth began to sink underneath the formidable pressure of the foot of Mahakali, Lord Shiva assumed the form of a dead body and lay on the ground, sandwiched between the foot of the Goddess and the earth, so as to cushion the pounding of the earth by the ferocious thumping of it by the Goddess. In Tantra Yoga, the Goddess is depicted as doing meditation while sitting on a dead corpse in the cremation ground; hence the reference to her sitting

on a dead body in the last word— see also verse no. 27 in this context.]

इष्टा विशिष्टा (९६०) शिष्टेष्टा शिष्टाशिष्टप्रपूजिता ।
शतरूपा शतावर्त्ता विनीता सुरभिःसुरा ।।१४६।।

You are the chosen Goddess or deity called Ishta[1]. [960] You are especial, exceptional, distinguished, outstanding, sublime, prominent and equisite[2]. You are an ideal, the chosen deity and the honourable Lord God or Goddess (called Ishata) of those who are noble, virtuous, righteous, cultured, gentle, courteous and civilised, and therefore regarded as senior amongst other Gods and Goddesses (Shishta)[3]. You are adored, worshipped, honoured and revered by both the civilised, noble, cultured, gentle, sober and courteous people who are honourable and pleasant in their demeanours[4] as well as by those who are the opposite of them, i.e., those who are wicked, evil, lowly, mean, ignoble, uncivilised, uncultured, rough, haughty, uncourteous, dishonorable and insinuating in their behaviour, manners, conducts, thoughts and demeanours[5]. You have hundreds or countless forms[6]. You are like a Pestle (Shatawart)[7]*. You are courteous, polite, kind and gracious[8]. You are also known as Surabhi[9]**. [See also verse no. 91.] You are an embodiment of the divine ambrosia called Sura (literally an intoxicating and exhilarating drink, but not one that makes a man wild and reckless and which is denigrating and demeaning for his spiritual upliftment; but the elixir here is the Amrit which provides eternal bliss, peace and happiness to its drinkers)[10] (146).

[1]इष्टा, [2]विशिष्टा, [3]शिष्टेष्टा, [4]पूजिता शिष्टा, [5]ऽशिष्टप्रपूजिता, [6]शतरूपा, [7]शतावर्त्ता, [8]विनीता, [9]सुरभिः, [10]सुरा

[Note :- *The word Shatawart 'शतावर्ता' means a pestle. That is, you are the force which crushes and pounds and thereby reduces to power those forces of nature that are harmful and inimical for the creation. Another interpretation is this —you are that force that makes available life protecting and sustaining elements in the world for the benefit of creation and its creatures, because the word Shatawar also means the medicinal herb *Asparagus*. This, together with a pestle,

clearly means 'grinding coarse herbs, which are generally not eatable in their raw form, into a fine power with the help of the pestle, as the grinding of asparagus in a mortar by a pestle in the present case, so as to make them useable by the people.

**The word Surabhi 'सुरभि' literally means the following —one who has a divine fragrance and a pleasant aroma emanating from him; a divine cow with this name who is the patron Goddess and the progenitor of the cows; Tulsi or the basil plant which also gives out a sweet and pleasant aroma and is considered the holiest plant which is most dear to Lord Vishnu who accepts its leaves as a substitute for Laxmi. That is, even as Surabhi is the mother of holy cows, you too are the great mother of all honourable, auspicious, holy, good and noble things in this world; you represent the best of virtues. The pleasant aroma is a metaphor for divinity, holiness, auspiciousness, sublimity and authority that is emanating from you and which are your hallmarks. Something which is spiritually elevating for the soul as opposed to that which makes one restless, negatively charged or excited and become nervous. You are like Tulsi which is as dear to Lord Vishnu as his divine consort Laxmi.]

सुरेन्द्रमाता सुद्युम्ना (९७०) सुषुम्ना सूर्यसंस्थिता ।
समीक्षा सत्प्रतिष्ठा च निर्वृत्तिर्ज्ञानपारगा ।।१४७।।

You are the mother of Surendra (literally, the king of Gods; here meaning Indra. That is, you are Aditi who is the mother of Gods)[1]. [970] You are the glorious splendour, the auspicious brightness, the divine radiance and the stupendous dazzle of the Sun and its rays[2]. You are known as Sushumna[3]*. You are established in the Sun and are its vital source of stupendous energy, brightness, light, splendour, dazzle and radiance[4]. You are the one who reviews and investigates everything; you view everything, debate on it, discriminate between the good and the bad and then decide upon the punishment or reward which is commensurate with it; you are the judge[5]. You have an honourable and dignified presence; you have a good name and fame; your majesty, glories and grandeur

are well established and lauded[6]. You are the virtues of renunciation, dispassion and detachment personified[7]. You are the wisest and erudite, sagacious and scholarly, expert and enlightened in the knowledge of the sublime and transcendental[8] (147).

[1]सुरेन्द्रमाता, [2]सुद्युम्ना, [3]सुषुम्ना, [4]सूर्यसंस्थिता, [5]समीक्षा, [6]सत्प्रतिष्ठा, [7]निर्वृत्ति, [8]र्ज्ञानपारगा

[Note :- *You are that stupendous vital energy which is sought to be aroused by an Yogi or ascetic during his Yoga or meditation exercise during which this energy —which is trapped in the coiled subtle energy center called Kundalini present at the base of the spine —is released and it travels upwards through the Sushumna nerve or vein located at the core of the spinal cord. This energy snakes right up to the top of the head. When this happens, the Yogi is said to achieve the highest level of bliss and felicity, and he experiences Brahm. So this Sushumna nerve is regarded as the 'royal highway' leading to Brahm, the supreme, transcendental, sublime and subtle Lord of creation. In the present context, this epithet means that the Goddess is the medium by which a seeker/aspirant can attain the beatitude and felicity associated with Brahm.]

धर्मशास्त्रार्थकुशला धर्मज्ञा धर्मवाहना ।
धर्माधर्मविनिर्मात्री (९८०) धार्मिकाणां शिवप्रदा ।।१४८।।

You are expert in the tents, canons and the different shades of meaning of the different 'Dharma Shastras' (the scriptures). [That is, you are an expert in the hidden, subtle and sublime meaning, the different shades of interpretation, the various connotations and applications of the tenets and maxims as enshrined in the canons of the holy scriptures and other religious treatises. You are highly qualified as well as well versed in these texts and their canons; you are skilled, wise, scholarly and well learned in them.][1] You know the truthful meaning of what constitutes Dharma (i.e., what is righteous, noble, proper and virtuous)[2]. You are the flag bearer of Dharma; you are the vehicle, the carrier, the container, the receptacle and the upholder of Dharma[3]. [See also verse nos. 133, 149 and 150.] [980] You create both Dharma as well as its opposite counterpart, the Adharma. [That is you create both the good aspect as well as the bad in this creation; you create both evils and virtues, the noble and the ignoble, the righteous and the unrighteous, the auspicious and the inauspicious. There is no astonishment in it, because as a creator, the Goddess creates both the opposing forces of nature which counter balance each other even as a magnate has both the north and the south poles in the same piece, one attracting and other repelling— see also verse no. 149, word no. 3.][4] You provide auspiciousness and bliss[5] to those who follow the path of Dharma diligently, who are good, righteous, noble and virtuous[6] (148).

[1]धर्मशास्त्रार्थकुशला, [2]धर्मज्ञा, [3]धर्मवाहना, [4]धर्माधर्मविनिर्मात्री, [5]शिवप्रदा, [6]धार्मिकाणां

धर्मशक्तिर्धर्मयी विधर्मा विश्वधर्मिणी ।
धर्मान्तरा धर्ममध्या धर्मपूर्वी धनप्रिया ।।१४९।।

You are the inherent 'Shakti of Dharma'. [That is, you are the divine force, the driving energy, the fame and renown, the powers and prowess, the potent and strength, the glory and majesty, the vitality and drive that comes to a person who follows the path of Dharma, or the path marked by the virtues of righteousness, nobility of thought and deeds, probity and propriety. You are the innate quality that distinguishes Dharma; you are the vitality, the spirit, the energy and the strength of Dharma. In other words, you represent that subtle but sublime and remarkable force that enables Dharma to acquire its reputation, its strength and its vitality. You are at the core of Dharma; you form its base and its backbone.][1] You are a personification of Dharma; you are an embodiment, an image of it[2]. But most paradoxically, you represent even the opposite of Dharma, which is anti-Dharma or Adharma, i.e., those aspects which have virtues opposite to what constitutes Dharma (even as there is a 'Christ' and an 'antichrist')[3] (see verse no. 148, word no. 4 in this context). You stand for universal Dharma, or those tenets, those canons, those axioms or maxims that are universally applicable to the entire creation[4]. [In other words, you follow universal laws and virtues applicable to all the creatures, such as having equanimity and fortitude, treating all alike and being compassionate and merciful to the humble ones. You do not believe in sectariasm.] You are the end[5], the middle[6] and the beginning of Dharma[7]. [That is, you encompass the whole gamut of the definition of Dharma. No quality

or virtue that comes under the purview of Dharma escapes you or do not apply to you. See also verse nos. 133, 148 and 150.] You love Dhan or wealth (i.e., you are found of spiritual wealth; the word does not refer to the wealth of this perishable world)[8]* (149).

[1]धर्मशक्ति, [2]र्धर्मयी, [3]विधर्मा, [4]विश्वधर्मिणी, [5]धर्मान्तरा, [6]धर्ममध्या, [7]धर्मपूर्वा, [8]धनप्रिया

[Note :- *The last word 'Dhan Priya' 'धन प्रिया' literally means one who loves wealth. But the wealth here does not mean worldly wealth or worldly riches such as material objects of comfort and pleasure, pomp and pageantry. The 'wealth' here refers to the spiritual wealth, the wealth of good virtues and qualities, the wealth of fame and name, the wealth of auspiciousness and holiness, of divinity and sublimity, of righteousness and virtuousness, of magnanimity and graciousness, of charity and large heartedness, of mercy and compassion etc..]

धर्मोपदेशा (९९०) धर्मात्मा धर्मलभ्या धराधरा ।
कपाली शाकलामूर्तिः कलाकलितविग्रहा ।।१५०।।

[990] You are an exponent of Dharma and you preach it (i.e., you, propound, enunciate, elucidate, expound, explain and elaborate on the different aspects of religious cannons and tenets of the scriptures)[1]. You are Dharmatma (literally, the upright and righteous soul; one who diligently follows and upholds the path and tenets of Dharma; one who is righteous, noble and virtuous)[2]. You are attainable by Dharma (i.e., the only way to please you, to gain access to you and to find emancipation and salvation is through the path of Dharma)[3]. You bear the earth. [That is, the earth is sustained by Dharma; it is Dharma that protects that earth and its inhabitants that depend upon it from complete destruction at the hands of unrighteousness and evil forces which lead to anarchy and mayhem.][4] You are known as Kapaali (one who holds a hollowed out and upturned skull in the hand and uses it as a pot for collecting a drink)[5]. You are an image of Shaakal, which is branch of the Rig Veda. [That is, you are a personification of the sacred hymns contained in the Rig Veda. You exemplify them. You are as holy, pure, revered and sacred as those hymns; you are honourable as the holy scripture itself; you embody all the transcendental

knowledge contained in any one of the branches of the Rig Veda, like the Shaakal branch.][6] Your form and image has been most beautifully, thoughtfully, skillfully, wisely and adroitly conceived, imagined or visualised. [That is, your divine and sublime form that is being worshipped and admired in this Canto by using 1008 words or names to describe it has been conceived or conceptualised by great sages and seers after careful thought and consideration. Your form has a more beautiful, more profound ramification than that which apparently meets the eyes. It has a spiritual and metaphysical aspect. It is not the gross body that is seen by the eye here in the battlefield of Pushkar, but your truth is subtle, sublime and transcendental. In a more mundane meaning, the word means that the goddess has a most beautifully shaped form, is most charming and attractive, well contoured, well proportioned and well endowed with majesty and grandeur. Obviously, this is not the case with Mahakali, because she is very horrifying and ugly to look at in the battlefield. So, the Goddess referred to here is not her physical form but her more sublime, ethereal and subtle form as the divine cosmic Shakti.][7] (150)

[1]धर्मोपदेशा, [2]धर्मात्मा, [3]धर्मलभ्या, [4]धराधरा, [5]कपाली, [6]शाकलामूर्तिः, [7]कलाकलितविग्रहा

धर्मशक्तिविनिर्मुक्ता सर्वशक्त्याश्रया ।
सर्वा सर्वेश्वरी (१०००) सूक्ष्मा सुसूक्ष्मज्ञानरूपिणी ।।१५१।।

You are that Shakti of Dharma (authority, energy, strength, power, vitality and force incumbent with righteousness) which is special, which is distinguished and stands apart from all the rest of the Shaktis or conventional forces in creation. Your Shakti is transcendental and sublime, supreme and subtle, most almighty and stupendously powerful and potential, because it is founded on Dharma, and it is not constrained by any conventional or traditional definitions[1]. You are the habitat, the refuge, the resting place, the seat and the foundation of all the Shakti present in this creation[2]. You are supreme, exalted and the highest aughority[3] [1000] You are the Lord, the supreme mistress, the divine Goddess and the Authority of all[4]. You are fine, ingenius, sublime and subtle[5]. You are an embodiment and an image of that knowledge which is most sublime and subtle,

most minute and microscopic (i.e., a knowledge that requires a sharp and penetrating intellect, a discriminating mind, a sense of deep wisdom and relevant skills of surgical insight to comprehend, understand and grasp it)[6] (151).

[1]धर्मशक्तिविनिर्मुक्ता, [2]सर्वशक्त्याश्रया, [3]सर्वा, [4]सर्वेश्वरी, [5]सूक्ष्मा, [6]सुसूक्ष्मज्ञानरूपिणी

प्रधानपुरुषेशाना महापुरुषसाक्षिणी ।
सदाशिवा वियन्मूर्तिदेवमूर्तिरमूर्तिका (१००८) ।।१५२।।

You are the chief Authority (literally, the chief Purush; here referring to the Viraat Purush or the macrocosmic primary male aspect of creation)[1]; you are Ishan (or Lord Shiva personified)[2]. You are a proof to establish the existence of that 'Maha Purush', literally that 'great male' (as referred in words 1 and 2 earlier)[3]. You are eternally beautiful, truthful and auspicious as Lord Shiva is[4]. [1008] You are an image of 'Vyom' or the sky (i.e., you are as vast, fathomless, measureless and infinite as well as pristine pure, spotless and without any taints as the sky element; you pervade uniformally in the whole cosmos just like the space which pervades everything from inside and outside— see also verse nos. 23 and 82)[5]. You are all the Gods personified in your single being[6], but at the same time, you are formless and attributeless; you have no gross body; you do not have any image (because you are subtle and sublime, formless and attributeless), and you go beyond definition, comprehension and logic[7]. I most reverentially bow before you[8]' (152).

[1]प्रधानपुरुषे, [2]ईशाना, [3]महापुरुषसाक्षिणी, [4]सदाशिवा, [5]न्मूर्ति, [6]देवमूर्ति, [7]रमूर्तिका, [8]वियन्मू

एवं नाम्नां सहस्रेण तुष्टाव रघुनन्दनः ।
कृतांजलिपुटो भूत्वा सीतां हृष्टतनूरुहाम् ।।१५३।।

With these prayers which consisted of 1008 divine, glorious, magnificent and marvelous names of the supreme Goddess, each name standing for one or more of the different distinguished characteristics and virtues of her and listed from verse nos. 17 to 152 of this canto, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) felt very contented[1], exhilarated and thrilled[2]. He bowed reverentially before Sita (in her manifestation as Mahakali) with joined hands[3] (153).

[1]तुष्टाव, [2]हृष्टतनूरुहाम्, [3]कृतांजलिपुटा

भारद्वाज महाभागा यश्चैतस्तोत्रमद्भुतम् ।
पठेद्वापि स याति परमं पदम् ।।१५४।।

[Sage Valmiki then paused for a while. He felt exhilarated and thrilled himself. He drew his breath and proclaimed—] 'Oh Bharadwaj, the fortunate one[1]! Anyone who hears or studies[2] as well as teaches or preaches[3] this most marvelous, fascinating, remarkable, glorious, grand, unparalleled and magnificent Stotras (hymns or prayers offered to a deity to praise and glorify it)[4] is able to attain the supreme stature of existence called the 'Param Pad'[5], which is the most exalted, the most sublime, the most glorious, the most honourable state attainable by a soul* (154).

[1]महाभागा, [2]पठेद्वा, [3]पठेद्वापि, [4]स्तोत्रमद्भुतम्, [5]परमं पदम्

[Note :- *In Vedanta, this Param Pad is equivalent to emancipation and salvation. That is, it is the merger of the microcosmic individual soul of the creature with its parent, the macrocosmic all-pervading soul of the cosmos known as supreme Brahm. Here, the Goddess is represented as the energy and vitality of that supreme Brahm revealed for the benefit of the devotees of Brahm. So, the Param Pad is the attainment of that Brahm. Literally, the word 'Pad' means 'feet' and 'Param' means the 'supreme and the most exalted'. So, 'Param Pad' means the attainment of the supreme, holy, divine and august feet of the chosen deity as an accomplishment of salvation.]

ब्रह्मक्षत्रियविड्योनिर्ब्रह्म प्राप्नोति शाश्वतम् ।
शूद्रः सद्गतिमाप्नोति धनधान्यविभूतयः ।।१५५।।

By reading and preaching these hymns, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are able to attain the universal, immortal and eternal Brahma[1], while the Shudras get redemption of their souls[2] as well as material wealth and prosperity, glory and renown in this world[3] (155).

[1]ब्रह्मक्षत्रियविड्योनिर्ब्रह्म प्राप्नोति शाश्वतम्, [2]शूद्रः सद्गति, [3]धनधान्यविभूतयः

भवन्ति स्तोत्रमहात्म्यादेतत्स्वस्त्ययनं महत् ।
मारीभये राजभये तथा चोराग्निजे भये ।।१५६।।

This Stotras (sacred hymns) has stupendous and remarkable potentials to provide great auspiciousness and welfare[1]. It eliminates/

dispels fears of epidemics[2], fear of persecution by the king[3], fear from thieves[4] and fire[5] (156).

[1]तत्स्वस्त्ययनं महत्, [2]मारीभये, [3]राजभये, [4]चोरा, [5]ऽग्निजे भये

व्याधीनां प्रभवे धोरे शत्रू थाने च संकटे ।
अनावृष्टिभये विप्र सर्वशान्तिकरं परम् ।।१५७।।

It provides great solace and succour[1] from grave and serious maladies[2] as well as it alleviates fears from being tormented by enemies[3]. It gives relief from drought and famine[4] (157).

[1]सर्वशान्तिकरं परम्, [2]व्याधीनां प्रभवे धोरे, [3]शत्रू संकटे, [4]अनावृष्टिभये

यद्यदिष्टतमंयस्य तत्सर्वंस्तोत्रतो भवेत् ।
यत्रैतत्पठ्यते सम्यक् सीतानामसहस्रकम् ।।१५८।।

This Stotra (prayer, hymns) has the potentials to fulfill all the desires, aspirations, wishes, hopes and expectations[1] of those who read it with devotion, conviction and faith[2]. This Stotra, known as 'the thousand names of Sita'[3]—which eulogises the divine Goddess' great virtues and glories, her majesty and magnificence, her marvelous qualities and potentials —should be read wholly and continuously, from the very beginning to its end, without any disruption or break[4] (158).

[1]यद्यदिष्टतमंयस्य तत्सर्वं, [2]यत्रैतत्पठ्यत, [3]सीतानामसहस्रकम्, [4]सम्यक्

रामेण सहिता देवी तिष्ठत्यसंशयम् ।
महापापातिपापानिविलयं यान्ति सुव्रत ।।१५९।।

Oh the righteous and auspicious one[1]! Whenever this happens (or, whenever these Stotras are read, chanted, heard, taught or studied and recited), the Goddess comes and presents[2] herself there alongside Sri Ram[3]; there is no doubt about it[4]. Oh Suvrat (the one who keeps righteous vows and is righteous himself, a reference to sage Bharadwaj)! The greatest and the gravest of sins[5] come to an end and are dispelled, leaving behind no adverse consequences in their wake[6] as a beneficial effect of this Stotra (honouring and praising the divine aspect of Sita with her 1008 names symbolising the great virtues and potential powers of the great cosmic Shakti or energy or vitality of Brahm that had revealed itself in her form to eliminate all the evils forces from the face of the earth and restore the balance in favour of goodness and righteousness) (159).

[1]सुव्रत, [2]देवी तिष्ठत्य, [3]रामेण सहिता, [4]त्यसंशयम्, [5]महापापातिपापानि, [6]विलयं

Thus ends canto 25 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing how Sri Ram had reverentially prayed to Sita, in her manifestation as Mahakali, with 1008 names signifying her divinity, glories and potentials as the divine Mother Goddess or the cosmic Shakti of this creation.

——*—*

Canto 26
Sri Ram continues to pray to Sita; her reverting back to her original form from Mahakali; preparation to return to Ayodhya

In the earlier canto no. 25, Sri Ram had fervently prayed to the ferocious, unrelenting and angry form of Sita as Mahakali, the great black Goddess of the death and destruction. Then he requested her to calm down, and Sita regained her original pleasant, gentle and sober form and composure (verse no. 3). Once again, Sri Ram reverentially prayed to that great Goddess, now as Sita in her auspicious form as compared to her unconventional form as Mahakali of the earlier canto. Pleased, the great Goddess then blessed Sri Ram, and the couple made final preparations to return home to Ayodhya (verse no. 47). Victory over the thousand headed Ravana is celebrated by the Gods by beating kettle drums and showering flowers on Sri Ram and Sita (verse no. 46). We also come to learn why Sri Ram is dark complexioned (verse no. 41).

एवं नामसहस्रेण स्तुत्वऽसौ रघुनन्दनः ।
भूय प्रणम्य प्रीतात्मा प्रोवाचेदं कृतांजलिः ।।१।।

Raghunandan (Sri Ram) reverentially prayed to Sita (or sang holy eulogies in her majesty's honour) using the thousand names. Then he joined his hands once again in humility and reverence. He said— (1).

यदेत्तदैश्वरं रूपं घोरं ते परमेश्वरि ।
भीतोऽस्मि साम्प्रतं दृष्ट्वा रूपमन्यत्यप्रदर्शय ।।२।।

'Oh the supreme Goddess (Mahakali)! This formidable, fierce and stupendously colossus form of yours is scaring me[1]. Hence, please calm down and come back to your original gentle, sober, sweet and pleasing form[2] as Sita, the form which I love and wish to see[3]' (2).

[1]रूपं घोरं भीतोऽस्मि, [2]साम्प्रतं रूपमन्यत्यप्रदर्शय, [3]दृष्ट्वा

एवमुक्ताथ सा देवी तेन रामेण मैथिली ।
संहृत्य दर्शयामास स्वं रूपं परमं पुनः ।।३।।

When Sri Ram requested Maithili (literally the daughter of Mithila, the city of her birth; here referring to Sita), she shed her horrifying form (as Mahakali) and reverted back to her former self (as Sita)which was charming, gentle, mild and pleasant to behold (3).

कांचनाम्बुरुहप्रख्यं पद्मोत्पलसुगन्धिकम् ।
सुनेत्रं द्विभुजं सौम्यं नीलालकविभूषितम् ।।४।।

[The form of Sita, the queen consort of Sri Ram, is being described here now—] She was beautiful, glorious, charming and radiant like a golden lotus[1]. She resembled the petals of such a flower —which emanated a sweet and pleasant fragrance[2]. She had charming and beautiful eyes as well as two arms[3]. She was adorned by curly hairs which had the shade of light blue colour[4]. She presented a most gentle, sober, pleasant and charming picture[5] (4).

[1]कांचनाम्बुरुहप्रख्यं, [2]पद्मोत्पलसुगन्धिकम्, [3]सुनेत्रं द्विभुजं, [4]नीलालकविभूषितम्, [5]सौम्यं

रक्तमादाम्बुजतलं सुरक्तकरपल्वम् ।
श्रीमद्विशालसद्वृत्तललाटतिलकोज्जवलम् ।।५।।

Her feet were pink or red in colour and so were her palms[1]. [This is because chaste married women in India, whose husband is alive, usually paint their feet and palms with a red dye called Mehadi which is a paste made from the leaves of the myrtle plant). Her forehead was broad, regal and majestic[2]; it was adorned by a bright Tilak Mark (usually it is a bright red dot put on the forehead of a Hindu women) as a symbol of her honour, glory, fame and fortunes— collectively known as the virtues of 'Sri'[3]* (5).

[1]रक्तमादाम्बुजतलं सुरक्तकरपल्वम्, [2]श्रीमद्विशालसद्वृत्तललाट, [3]तिलकोज्जवलम्

[Note :- *A specially prepared powder called 'Sri' made from turmeric and a dye is used to make the Tilak mark on the forehead. Sandalwood powder is also used as an ingredient of Sri. The word 'Sri' also refers to an ornament called 'Bendi' worn on the forehead, in the center of the hair line which is parted at the center of the head. It also means the vermillion mark put on the head of a married woman. The word 'Sri' generally refers to the virtues of glory, fame, wealth and fortunes which are deemed to be present and available for a woman if her husband is alive; for a married woman, her husband is her Sri.]

भूषितं चारुसर्वांगं भूषणैरभिशोभितम् ।
दधानं सुरसां मालां विशालां हेमनिर्मिताम् ।।६।।

Her entire body was decorated by beautiful ornaments[1]. She wore a large garland made of gold[2] (6).

[1]भूषितं चारुसर्वांगं भूषणैरभिशोभितम्, [2]दधानं सुरसां मालां विशालां हेमनिर्मिताम्

ईषस्मितं सुबिम्बोष्ठं नूपुराम्बरसंयुतम् ।
प्रसन्नवदनं दिव्यमनन्तमहिमास्पदम् ।।७।।

Her lips had a sweet smile on them; they were of a glowing red colour[1]. She wore anklets and beautiful clothes called Ambar[2]. She had a cheerful and happy face[3]. She looked magnificent, glorious, divine and sublime[4]. She was a repository of infinite glories and majesties, and her fame had no end[5] (7).

[1]ईषस्मितं सुबिम्बोष्ठं, [2]नूपुराम्बरसंयुतम्, [3]प्रसन्नवदनं, [4]दिव्यमनन्त, [5]महिमास्पदम्

तदीदृशं समालोक्य रूपं रघुकुलोत्तमः ।
भीतिं संत्यज्य हृष्टात्मा बभाषे परमेश्वरीम् ।।८।।

The most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) saw her (Sita) in her usual form and this caused him to shed all fears of her. He felt very exhilarated and praised the supreme Goddess called Parmeshwari (8).

अद्य मे सफलं जन्म अद्य मे सफलं तपः ।
यन्मे साक्षात्त्वमव्यक्ता प्रसन्ना दृष्टिगोचरा ।।९।।

He said, 'My birth and doing of Tapa (austerities, penances and observing religious vows) have borne fruit today that you, who is essentially formless and attributeless, have revealed yourself in front of my eyes so that I can have your divine sight. You have been

pleased by me, and are gracious and kind upon me (9).

त्वया सृष्टं जगत्सर्वं प्रधानाद्यं त्वयि स्थितम् ।
त्वय्येय लीयते देवि त्वमेव च परागतिः ।।१०।।

It is you who has created the entire world[1]. All the important authorities of this creation from the beginning, the chief Gods and the main elements (such as space, wind, fire, water, earth), are all established in you (i.e., they have their origin in you, they are founded upon you, they are protected by you and sustained by you)[2]. Oh Goddess! All this (i.e., the entire creation) finally dissolves in or merges with you at the end[3]. You are the ultimate end and the supreme stature called Param Pad for all[4] (10).

[1]सृष्टं जगत्सर्वं, [2]प्रधानाद्यं त्वयि स्थितम्, [3]त्वय्येय लीयते, [4]त्वमेव च परागतिः

वदन्ति केचित्त्वामेव प्रकृतिं विकृतेः पराम् ।
अपरे परमात्मज्ञाः शिवेति शिवसंश्रये ।।११।।

You are praised and lauded as the supreme, transcendental entity[1] that is beyond the purview of either Prakriti (the positive aspects of Nature)[2] or Vikriti (the negative aspects of Nature— see verse no. 31 also)[3]*. Those who are wise and well versed in the supreme and transcendental knowledge of the Parmatma (the Supreme Soul of creation, the Lord God)[4] call you Shivaa** because you have taken the shelter and remain under the protection of Shiva[6] (the third God in the Hindu Trinity who is charged with the function of creating death and causing the conclusion of the creation; he is considered the wisest amongst the 3 trinity Gods, the others being Brahma and Vishnu) (11).

[1]वदन्ति पराम्, [2]प्रकृतिं, [3]विकृतेः, [4]परमात्मज्ञाः, [5]शिवेति, [6]शिवसंश्रये

[Note :- *The word 'Prakriti' means nature, temperament, inclinations and habits of a person, besides Nature which is the gross manifestation of Brahm and is revealed in the form of the world. Those virtues that are good, nurture life, while those that are evil and bad, lead to decay, decadence and ruin. The Goddess is the supreme authority; she is like a judge or king who gives rewards for good deeds and awards punishment for bad deeds, but himself remains aloof and uninvolved.

**The word 'Shiva' means beautiful, auspicious, holy, truthful, wise and enlightened; it means 'one who redeems from sins and liberates from sufferings'. Since, according to mythology, Parvati is the divine consort of Lord Shiva, she is known as 'Shivaa' because she is dependent upon him, she is his divine consort.]

त्वयि प्रधानः पुरुषो महान्ब्रह्मा तथेश्वरः ।
अविद्या नियतिर्माया कालाद्याः शतशोऽभवन् ।।१२।।

The 'chief Purush' (i.e., the Viraat Purush who was the first cosmic revelation of Brahm; the macrocosmic Male aspect of creation; Lord Vishnu who is the chief authority and the main God who sustains and nourishes the creation; according to Purans, the God from whom the creator Brahma and the concluder Shiva had been born —see also verse no. 21)[1], the great Brahma (the creator of the universe who emerged atop a divine lotus that had emerged from the navel of the Viraat Purush as Lord Vishnu)[2], the Ishwar (here referring to Lord Shiva, the concluder of the world)[3], the Avidya (ignorance, lack of truthful knowledge)[4], Niyati (destiny)[5], Maya (delusions, illusions and hallucination; the factor which was responsible for the creation of this deluding world)[6], Kaal (time, circumstance, death and decay)[7] —hundreds of them are present in you[8] (12).

[1]प्रधानः पुरुषा, [2]महान्ब्रह्मा, [3]तथेश्वरः, [4]अविद्या, [5]नियति, [6]र्माया, [7]कालाद्याः, [8]शतशोऽभवन्

त्वं हि सा परमा शक्तिरनन्ता परमेष्ठिनी ।
सर्वभेदिविनिर्मुक्ता सर्वभेदाश्रया निजा ।।१३।।

You are the supreme Authority, its energy, strength, vitality, prowess and powers[1]. You are eternal, without an end, infinite, fathomless and measureless[2]. You are known as Parmeshthi (because you personify all the divine Gods at once —such as the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu, the annihilator Shiva, the macrocosmic Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the invisible authority that is the Supreme Soul of the creation, the most powerful and potent Fire-God, and the first human of the world, called Manu— see also verse no. 49 and 75 of canto 25)[3]. You are free from the different faults associated with all types of differences of

opinion, views and thoughts, distinctions and schisms leading to duality, disparities, debates and arguments (i.e., you are none of these; you are one, uniform, seamless, immutable, un-fractionable, unequivocal, beyond any confusion and doubt; you are non dual, equal in every respect, universal and similar under all conditions)[4]. But paradoxically, you are the foundation upon which, and the fount from where, all the differences and distinctions, all the disparities and schisms in this world originate; you are their shelter and resting place[5]. [This is because you are the creator of both the good and the bad. All the opposite forces in the universe which exist, perhaps to maintain an equilibrium, have their origin in you —there is the rainy season as well as dry summer, there is the vast ocean full of water as well as the parch dry desert, there is the night as well as the day, there are good people who are exemplarily virtuous as well as those who are evil, pervert and wicked to the core. They are all your offspring. Where will they go without you; where else will they find shelter if not with you!] You are what you are; you treat all of them alike as if all are your own children[6] (because you are the supreme mother of the entire creation) (13).

[1]परमा शक्ति, [2]ऽनन्ता, [3]परमेष्ठिनी, [4]सर्वभेदिविनिर्मुक्ता, [5]सर्वभेदाश्रया, [6]निजा

त्वामधिष्ठाय योगेशि! पुरुषः परमेश्वरीम् ।
प्रधानाद्यं जगत्कृत्स्नं करोति विकरोति च ।।१४।।

Oh the most exalted, revered and famous ascetic (who is the patron Goddess of Yogis or ascetics. See note no. *** of verse no. 16 below)[1]. You are the supreme Goddess[2] who has the authority of the supreme Lord, the Purush (i.e., the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu)[3], vested in you[4]. As the primary and primordial supreme Authority and the chief Being[5], you create[6] and then conclude the entire creation[7] (14).

[1]योगेशि, [2]परमेश्वरीम्, [3] पुरुषः, [4]त्वामधिष्ठाय, [5]प्रधानाद्यं, [6]जगत्कृत्स्नं, [7]विकरोति

त्वयैव संगतो देवः स्वमानन्दं समश्नुते ।
त्वमेव परमानन्दस्त्वमेवानन्ददायिनी ।।१५।।

It is by your company (i.e., grace and blessing) that the Gods enjoy the bliss and happiness that comes with self realisation and enlightenment[1]. It is you who bestows supreme bliss, beatitude,

joy and felicity[2] (15).

[1]स्वमानन्दं, [2]परमानन्दस्त्वमेवानन्ददायिनी

त्वमेव परमं व्योम महाज्योतिर्निरंजनम् ।
शिवं सर्वगतं सूक्ष्मं परं ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।।१६।।

You are the one who is known as, or who has revealed herself, as the great space of the sky* (which is vast, fathomless, measureless and without any boundaries or parameters; i.e., the Goddess has these characteristics and virtues)[1]. You are the supreme and transcendental light and illumination that has expelled darkness from this world[2]**. You are Niranjan, i.e., you are invisible, subtle, sublime, pure, holy and divine; you do not have any faults or blemishes in you[3]. You are Shiva (pure, truthful, auspicious, enlightened, beautiful, redeemer and liberator)[4]***; are all pervading and omnipresent[5]; are minute, minuscule, subtle, sublime and microcosmic as well as macroscopic in essence and nature[6]; are the supreme, transcendental, sublime Brahm[7]; and are eternal, infinite, perpetual, primary, primeval, truthful and universal in nature and essence[8] (16).

[1]परमं व्योम, [2]महाज्योति, [3]र्निरंजनम्, [4]शिवं, [5]सर्वगतं, [6]सूक्ष्मं, [7]परं ब्रह्म, [8]सनातनम्

[Note :- *The word 'sky or Vyom' 'व्योम' is used to describe the Goddess' vastness, purity, all-pervading and all-encompassing virtue, her immanence and immutability. Everything that exists is present in the Vyom or the sky — the sky is present outside as well as inside of everything. For example, if we take a pitcher, the sky is present outside the pitcher as well as inside the space enclosed by body of the pitcher. The sky was also the first element of creation, because the most subtlest of the 5 elements, the sound, was present in it. See also canto 25, verse nos. 23, 82 and 152.

(b) **The word 'Jyoti' 'ज्योति' simply means light and illumination, something which removes darkness. Darkness, on the other hand, is the symbol for ignorance and delusion creating a chain of illusions and hallucination in their wake. All the phantoms, ghosts and horrifying views, which are basically false and are faults created by an ignorant mind, are seen in the background of the darkness and they vanish

in light. 'Agyan' or lack of knowledge is also symbolised by darkness. So by saying that the Goddess is light embodied, sage Valmiki wishes to emphasise the point that where there is the light of enlightenment represented by the Goddess, there will be no scope of the existence of darkness symbolised by all the evil forces of creation. See also verse no. 22 of canto 25.

(c) ***The word 'Shiv or Shiva' 'शिवं' has a wide variety of meaning —it stands for beauty, truth and enlightenment; for the one who is a redeemer of sins and the one who provides liberation from all the sufferings of this world; the god who provides Moksha or final emancipation and salvation by pronouncing the 'Tarak Mantra', or the liberation providing divine word 'Ram' in the ears of a dying person at the abode of Shiva in Varanasi, which is a mythological holy pilgrim city where Shiva is supposed to live eternally. He is the patron God of ascetics or Yogis as well as those who are enlightened and wise; that is why he is also known as Mahadev, because he is the greatest amongst the Gods, he has the best of virtues that any God must possess —such as enlightenment and wisdom, renunciation and dispassion, doing constant Tapa and contemplation etc.. Shiva is therefore an enlightened ascetic. He is a householder, because he has Parvati as his consort, but at the same time he is a renunciate ascetic par excellence because he remains ever engrossed in contemplation and mediation like a Sanyasi (a renunciate) and a Yogi (an ascetic).]

त्वं शक्रः सर्ववेदानां ब्रह्मा ब्रह्मविदामपि ।
सांख्यानां कपिलो देवा रुद्राणामसि शंकरः ।।१७।।

You are like Shakra* (Indra) who is the King (Lord) of all the Gods as well as the creation[1]. You are like Brahma**, who is the patriarch creator of the Vedas as well as the rest of the creation, and therefore is the senior most among those who are wise, erudite, sagacious and enlightened about Brahm, the supreme, transcendental Soul of the cosmos[2]. Amongst those who are expert in the philosophy of Sankhya Shastra[3]***, you are like Kapil who had

first conceived, propounded and enunciated this particular school of philosophy. Amongst the Gods and the 11 Rudras****, you are like Shankar (Lord Shiva) who is the chief of the Rudras and considered the wisest and the most enlightened amongst the Gods[4] (see note to verse no. 16 above) (17).

[1]शक्रः सर्ववेदानां, [2]ब्रह्मा ब्रह्मविदामपि, [3]सांख्यानां कपिलो, [4]देवा रुद्राणामसि शंकरः

[Note :- *Indra is also known as Shakra; he is the King of Gods. So the Goddess is compared to him to indicate the fact that amongst the immortals, the great ones, the most exalted and honoured ones, she has the same importance and position as Indra has amongst the Gods.

**Brahma had created the 4 Vedas during the initial phases of creation. The latter are great repositories of all the knowledge that exist in creation. Every other form of knowledge is basically an elaboration, an explanation, an exposition, a re-interpretation of the primary knowledge which was encrypted by Brahma in the Vedas. The Vedas are therefore an encyclopedia of knowledge. So those persons who wish to attain the exalted and honoured state of being recognised as wise, erudite, scholarly, sagacious, adroit and experts, should be well versed in the knowledge contained in the canons of the Vedas. Since Brahma was the primary source of this knowledge, and since he had pronounced this knowledge first, he is considered the senior most amongst such people who are wise and erudite. He is the forefather of all knowledge. Hence, the Goddess is compared to him to symbolise the fact that she is the most scholarly, learned, wise, enlightened, revered and honoured Being in creation.

***There are 6 schools in Hindu philosophy, and sage Kapil was the exponent of one of the schools known as Sankhya Shastra. This philosophy has been explained in detail in (i) canto 11, verse no. 42 and its note, and (ii) canto 25, verse no. 118 and its note.

****The 11 Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva —they are Mannu (मन्यु), Manu (मनु), Mahinas (महिनस), Mahan (महान), Shiva (शिव), Ritdhwaj (ऋतध्वज), Ugrareta (उग्ररेता), Bhava (भव), Kaal (काल), Vamdeo (वामदेव), and Dhritvrat

(धृतव्रत) —Rig Veda 1/43/1. The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. The Goddess is terrible in her form as Mahakali; she kills mercilessly. But this killing is a sort of punishment for the evil ones, so that goodness can prevail over evil and pervert factors of creation.]

आदित्यानामुपेन्द्रस्त्वं वसूनां चैव पावकः ।
वेदानां सामवेदस्त्वं गायत्रीच्छन्दसामपि ।।१८।।

You are Upendra amongst the 12 Adityas[*] (the mythological Suns)[1]. Amongst the Vasus[**], you are the Fire-God[2]. Amongst the Vedas, you are the Sam Veda[3***]. Amidst the various Chandas (poetical composition or a style of writing in which the hymns of the Vedas were composed), you are the Gayatri Chanda (considered the best system of writing hymns)[4****] (18).

[1]आदित्यानामुपेन्द्रस्त्वं, [2]वसूनां चैव पावकः, [3]वेदानां सामवेदस्त्वं, [4]गायत्रीच्छन्दसामपि

[Note :- [*](a) There are 12 Adityas or mythological suns. Upendra is the chief amongst them. The word also means an assistant of Indra who carries out the routine functions of Indra like a prime minister does in relation to a worldly king. See also canto 9, note to verse no. 18-21.

[**](b) The 'Vasus' are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life; they are eight in number—Vishnu is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and 'Ray' representing glory and fame. The element 'Fire' is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. See also canto 9, note to verse no. 18-21.

[***](c) There are 4 Vedas —the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva. The Sam Vedas is considered the most lucid and beautiful from metaphysical point of view because it can be sung in the most melodious of tunes.

[****](d) The Gayatri Chanda has been used extensively in composing the hymns of the Sam Veda. It is a style of verse composition adopted for writing the hymns of the Vedas. It

consists of 3 stanzas or steps, each having 8 letters or syllables. Hence, there are 8 x 3 = 24 letters in all in one Chanda.]

अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां गतीनां परमा गतिः ।
माया त्वं सर्वशक्तीनां कालः कलयतामपि ।।१९।।

In the field of knowledge and education, called Vidya, you are akin to 'Adhyatma Vidya'[1] (or the science of spiritualism, metaphysics and transcendental Atma). Amongst the various destinations for a creature's soul, you are the final redemption, the supreme end which is called emancipation and salvation, and from where the soul does not have to re-enter the cycle of birth and death. This is known as Param Pad[2]. You are at the core, in the heart of the entire creation as the spark, as the basic dynamic driving force, as the primary subtle energy that powers all the forms of Shaktis (forces, strength, authorities, powers and potentials) that drive this creation. You are, as it were, the dynamo that keeps the industrious world running. As such, you are the primary 'Maya Shakti' of creation (because it is Maya that drives the world; it is Maya in its various forms and manifestations that impels the creature to do what it does in this creation— see also canto 25, verse nos. 28, 36, 65, 90, 99 and 151)[3]. You are like Kaal who is the senior God amongst all those who can, or who have the authority and powers to bring to an end all that exist (i.e., you are the ultimate deciding authority that determines an end of anything, you are the force that actually facilitates such as end, you are the one who controls the destiny of all)[4] (19).

[1]अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानां, [2]गतीनां परमा गतिः, [3]माया त्वं सर्वशक्तीनां, [4]कालः कलयतामपि

ॐकारः सर्वगुह्यानां वर्णानां च द्विजोत्तमः ।
आश्रमाणां गृहस्थस्त्वमीश्वरणां महेश्वरः ।।२०।।

You are Onkar (which is a manifestation of Brahm and is the cosmic divine word that pervades the entire cosmos, encapsulating not only Brahm but also the entire gamut of creation in its ambit; it is used as a synonym for Brahm)[1]. It is most secret and profound, and you (Goddess Mahakali or the supreme Goddess) are therefore like it[2]*. Amongst the various Varans** (sections or classes in society),

you are akin to the most exalted Brahmins[3]. In the various Ashrams*** (phases in life), you are a Grihastha (householder)[4]. Amongst all the Gods, you are Maheshwar, the great God known as Shiva, personified[5] (20).

[1]ॐकार:, [2]सर्वगुह्यानां, [3]वर्णानां च द्विजोत्तम:, [4]आश्रमाणां गृहस्थस्त्व, [5]ईश्वरणां महेश्वर:

[Note :- *Omkar is the divine word 'OM'. It is the primary sound consisting of 3 letters —A, U, M —symbolising creation, its birth, its growth and its conclusion respectively. At the end of pronouncing this word, mouth has to be closed indicating the silence that prevails at the end of the creation as well as in the deep recesses of the cosmos. This silence represents Brahm, because the creation has originated from silence, which is indicative of a state of 'no activity' representing the basic nature of Brahm that he does not do anything himself, but uses his divine Shakti, revealed in the form of the supreme Goddess, to do what he wants to do. According to Upanishads, OM is also called Pranav, a synonym for the transcendental, supreme, subtle, sublime and attributeless Brahm. OM is the supreme Mantra. Mantras are divine letters, syllables or words having mystical powers, chanted or repeated to attain Brahm. It is invoked to honour any God; it is their glory personified and is their honour and title. OM is also invoked before the beginning of any religious activity, including the chanting of the hymns themselves, in order to invoke the blessings of the supreme Brahm. It is also pronounced at the end of all such activities, as a symbol of bowing and showing respect to that supreme Brahm. Hence, the goddess being the supreme authority and the divine mother of all, and because she is the manifestation of that supreme Brahm and represents his marvelous powers, she is also similar to OM. The word OM is used as a synonym for Brahm as well as the Goddess Mahakali. The concept of OM requires a higher intellect to comprehend and understand. It is so profound and remarkable that it is beyond the intellectual reach of ordinary men. Hence it is the greatest

secret, the greatest mystery of creation even as the primary nature and essential form of the Goddess is a great secret and a great mystery. See also canto 25, verse no. 32.

**The society has been divided into 4 sections or classes by ancient sages to regulate its functioning by delegation of authority and clearly specifying the jobs each section is supposed to do to maintain order and system in the world, to prevent overlapping of functions and avoid anarchy and chaos. These 4 sections are— (a) Brahmins —the learned and teaching class; they also presided over religious functions as priests, because these functions were central to life in the Vedic period; (b) Kshatriyas —they were the warrior, fighting, kingly class. They were assigned the job of giving protection to the society, dispensing justice and maintaining general law and order. (c) Vaishyas —they were the trading and farming class responsible for commerce and wealth generation. They provided for the necessities for a comfortable life, and (d) the Shudras —the service class of people whose main function was to free the other 3 classes from the humdrums of daily chores and concentrate their energies to the particular jobs assigned to those classes to which they belonged.

***The life of a man is divided into 4 segments or Ashrams — (a) Brahmacharya —this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style, (b) Grihastha —when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the second phase called Grihastha Ashram which is a householder life. He marries, raises a family, produces wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life and dealings with this deceptive world with all their

accompanying horrifying problems, (c) Vaanprastha —this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas —this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and mediation, living a life of total renunciation and begging for food, and single mindedly aiming for emancipation and salvation. These concepts have been elaborately described in Nirvano-panishad of the Rig Veda tradition, in its verse nos. 83-87; an English version of this Upanishad has been included in the author's book 'Anthology of Rig Veda Upanishads' published separately.

****The word 'Ishwar' means the Lord God, and 'Maha' means the great one. So the word Maheshwar refers to the great God Shiva who is the only God to be honoured with this title of Maheshwar. He is foremost amongst Gods for his wisdom, erudition, renunciation and enlightenment. He is the most holy and auspicious amongst the Gods and has the 3rd eye of wisdom located at the tri-junction of his eyebrows and root of the nose. Hence he is also known as 'Trinetra' —meaning the one with 3 eyes. His symbol is the 'Lingam' which is shaped like the dome of a modern nuclear reactor signifying the fact that it encloses and represents the most glorious, the most stupendous, the most magnificent, the most remarkable and the most potent powers that are present in this creation.]

पुंसां त्वमेव पुरुष: सर्वभूतहृदि स्थित: ।
सर्वोपनिषदां देवि गुह्योपनिषदुच्यसे ।।२१।।

Amongst the males, you are Purush (the Viraat Purush who is the all-encompassing primary Male aspect of creation, or Lord Vishnu; i.e., you are the most supreme and exalted aspect of creation even as the Viraat Purush was the primary aspect of creation —see verse

no. 12)[1]. You reside in the heart of all mortal beings or all the creatures of this world[2]. Oh Goddess! You symbolise the essence of all great secrets contained in all the Upanishads (which are metaphysical and theological treatises called Vedanta)[3] (21).

[1]पुंसां त्वमेव पुरुष:, [2]सर्वभूतहृदि स्थित:, [3]सर्वोपनिषदां देवि गुह्योपनिषदुच्यस

ईशनांचासि भूपानां युगानां कृतमेव च ।
आदित्य: सर्वमार्गाणां वाचां देवी सरस्वती ।।२२।।

Amongst the kings, you are like an Emperor or Isha (Lord of kings)[1]. Amongst the 4 Yugs (the 4 large periods of times marking one cycle of creation and destruction of the world; these 4 Yugs are —Sat, Treta, Dwapar and the present Kali), you are Sat Yug (the first era which is considered the longest, the best, the most uncorrupt and during which Vedas and Vedic ritual occupied a central platform in the life of the world)[2]. Amongst all the paths open for a creature as well as the Gods, you represent that path taken by Aditya, the Sun-God, across the sky (i.e., you follow the path which is the best, most illuminated and glorious)[3]. You are Goddess Saraswati (the patron Goddess of speech, erudition, scholarship and wisdom) personified (22).

[1]ईशनांचासि भूपानां, [2]युगानां कृतमेव, [3]आदित्य: सर्वमार्गाणां, [4]वाचां देवी सरस्वती

त्वं लक्ष्मीश्चारुरूपाणां विष्णुर्मायाविनामपि ।
अरुन्धती सतीनां त्वं सुपर्ण: पततामसि ।।२३।।

Amongst those who look beautiful, charming and attractive, you are Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth and the divine consort of Vishnu)[1]. Amongst the magicians, artful jugglers, skilled conjurers, illusion creators and mavericks, you are Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of creation[2]. Amongst the Satis (those women who are chaste, immaculate, loyal to their husbands, scrupulous, righteous and uncorrupt), you are Arundhati (the wife of sage Vashistha, the moral preceptor of Sri Ram's family and the son of Brahma)[3]. Amongst the birds, you are the legendary Garud (the Eagle or Heron who is the mount of Lord Vishnu; he is said to be the swiftest, the most agile, the fastest and most active bird in creation)[4] (23).

[1]त्वं लक्ष्मीश्चारुरूपाणां, [2]विष्णुर्मायाविनामपि, [3]अरुन्धती सतीनां, [4]सुपर्ण: पततामसि

सूक्तानां पौरुषं सूक्तं ज्येष्ठं साम च सामसु ।

सावित्री ह्यासि जप्यानां यजुषां शतरुद्रियम् ।।२४।।

Amongst the Suktas (hymns, prayers, invocations, sayings) of the Vedas, you are the Purush Sukt[1]*. Amongst the hymns of the Sam Veda, you are the Jyestha** hymn (which is the best, the senior most, the eldest and the earliest of the hymns)[2]. Amongst the Mantras (divine and holy words having mystical powers) used in doing Japa (repetition of these Mantras), you are Savitri or Gayatri Mantra[3]***. Amongst the Yajurs**** (religious sacrifices), you are Shatrudra (literally, the fire sacrifice done by using the 100 named Stotra devoted to Lord Shiva, and since it has hundred names, it is known as Shat Rudra)[4] (24).

[1]सूक्तानां पौरुषं सूक्तं, [2]ज्येष्ठं साम च सामसु, [3]सावित्री ह्यासि जप्यानां, [4]यजुषां शतरुद्रियम्

[Note :- *The Purush Sukta is a devotional hymn dedicated to the Viraat Purush. It describes in brief the genesis of creation as per Rig Veda, 10th division, verse no. 19, and Yajur Veda, 31st Chapter or division. It consists of 18 stanzas and a detailed English version of this is published in this author's book 'an anthology of Rig Veda Upanishad' published separately.

**The word 'Sam' or 'Saam' means music and song. The Veda that was melodiously sung during fire sacrifices was therefore called the Sam Veda. Song is the best form of expression and a refined mode of speech. It needs a sweet voice, knowledge about the finer nuances of classical music, and is generally indulged into by the higher echelons of society.

***The Savitri Mantra is elaborately explained in 'Savitru-panishad' which is the 13th principal Upanishad belonging to the Sam Veda tradition, and it has also been published separately by this author in his book titled 'Anthology of the Sam Veda Upanishads'. It is also referred to as 'Gayatri Mantra' dedicated to the Sun-God.

The famous Gayatri Mantra is 'OM BHURBHUVAH SWAHA TATSAVITURVARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI DHIYO YONAH PRACODAYAT' (Rig Veda 3/62/10; Sam Veda 1462; Yajur Veda 3/35, 22/9,

30/2, 36/3) (The meaning of the Gayatri Mantra in full is as follows— 'OM salutation! OM is the supreme, transcendental Brahm. He is the Lord of the earth, the sky and the heavens. That Brahm is luminous like the Sun. He is the best, most excellent, most exalted divine entity who is a destroyer of sins. May he inspire, infuse and propel our intellect with wisdom, erudition and enlightenment so that we are purified and move on the righteous path, have noble thoughts and follow noble deeds.'

****The word 'Yajur' means a religious ritual associated with the performance of a sacrifice. During these rituals, Mantras are chanted. The most elaborate, potent and difficult ritual is the one in which incantations of the Mantra is done using the hundred (Shat) names of Shiva (Rudra).]

पर्वतानां महामेरुनन्तो भागिनामसि ।
सर्वेषां त्वं परं ब्रह्म त्वन्मयं सर्वमेव हि ।।२५।।

Amongst the mountains, you are the great Mt. Meru[1]. Amongst the 'fractions, parts, pieces, sections and divisions' (collectively called Bhag), you are 'endless, infinite, measureless and limitless' (collectively known as Anant)[2]. Verily, you are everything that exists (i.e., you embody everything in this creation)[3]. You are supreme, transcendental, sublime and subtle Brahma[4]. All 'that' and 'this' which exist in this cosmos is existent in you, present in you, established and founded in you[5] (25).

[1]पर्वतानां महामेरु, [2]ऽनन्तो भागिनामसि, [3]सर्वेषां त्वं, [4]परं ब्रह्म, [5]त्वन्मयं सर्वमेव हि

रूपं तवाशेषकलाविहीनमगोचरं निर्मलमेकरूपम् ।
अनादिमध्यान्तमनन्तमाद्यं नमामि सत्यं तमसी परस्तात् ।।२६।।

Your form is beyond the reach and purview of the various periods of time (e.g., past, present, future)[1]; it is uniform, unchangeable, immutable and universal[2]; it is invisible and beyond the perception of sight[3]; and it is pure, uncorrupt, pristine, immaculate, divine, holy, august, faultless, flawless and without any blemishes and taints of any kind[4]. You and your form have no beginning, no middle and no end[5]. Your divine, subtle and sublime form is endless[6], truthful[7] and superior to and more exalted than your self[8]. I most reverentially bow before you[9] (26).

[1]रूपं तवाशेषकला, [2]कलाविहीन, [3]मगोचरं, [4]निर्मलमेकरूपम्, [5]अनादिमध्यान्त, [6]अनन्तमाद्यं, [7]सत्यं, [8]तमसी परस्तात्, [9]नमामि

यदेव पश्यन्ति जगत्प्रसूतिं वेदान्तविज्ञानविनिश्चितार्थाः ।
आनन्दमात्र परमाभिधानं तदेव रूपं प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम् ।।२७।।

The refined and supreme knowledge contained in Vedanta (literally, the end of the Vedas, i.e., the Upanishads)[1] has irrevocably and unequivocally decided, determined and conclusively established[2] that you are the great mother of the entire creation (i.e., the entire creation has been born from you; it is your offspring)[3]. Wise and erudite persons see you, perceive you, witness you or observe you[4] with this enlightened view. You are an image or an embodiment of pure bliss and felicity[5]. You are the supreme destiny and the transcendently authority that lays down the rules and regulations, their modes and the methods as well as the codes of conduct and thought that are ought to be followed by the entire creation[6]. I regularly, constantly and persistently visualise that supreme form of yours in the subtle eyes of my mind and heart[7]. I most reverentially bow before it (i.e., your such a divine and majestic form) daily[8] (27).

[1]वेदान्तविज्ञान, [2]विनिश्चितार्थाः, [3]जगत्प्रसूतिं, [4]यदेव पश्यन्ति, [5]आनन्दमात्र, [6]परमाभिधानं, [7]तदेव रूपं, [8]प्रणतोऽस्मि नित्यम्

अशेषसूत्रान्तरसन्निविष्टं प्रधानसंयोगवियोगहेतुः ।
तेजोमयं जन्मविनाश हीनं प्राणाभिधानं प्रणतोऽस्मि रूपम् ।।२८।।

You are at the core, the center or the focal point of all that is regarded as whole, un-fractioned and immutable. [That is, you are essentially complete and whole; you represent that entity which cannot be divided or fractioned into smaller parts. There is nothing that remains behind after you are removed from anything. In fact you pervade and encompass everything from within and without.][1] You are the chief cause[2] that creates either the union[3] or the separation[4] between any two entities. You are an embodiment of light and brilliance; you effuse and radiate illumination and brilliance; you are a glowing source of an incandescent light[5]. You neither take birth nor are you subject to decay and destruction[6]. You manifest yourself as 'Pran' (literally meaning the breath of life present in a creature; the vital wind that makes a dead body alive) and determine as well as regulate

its function, its flow and its activity[7]. I bow and prostrate most respectfully before this magnificent form of yours[8] (28).

[1]अशेषसूत्रान्तरसन्निविष्टं, [2]प्रधानहेतुः, [3]संयोग, [4]वियोग, [5]तेजोमयं, [6]जन्मविनाश हीनं, [7]प्राणाभिधानं, [8]प्रणतोऽस्मि रूपम्

आद्यन्तहीनं जगदात्मरूपं विभिन्नसंस्थं प्रकृतेः परस्तात् ।
कूटस्थमव्यक्तवपुस्तवैव नमामि रूपं पुरुषाभिधानम् ।।२९।।

You have no beginning or an end[1]. You are the Atma (soul) of the world[2]. You assume diverse forms and are established everywhere in this myriad world[3]. You are Mother Nature personified as 'Prakriti'[4], and at the same time you are beyond it[5]. You occupy a high and exalted place; you are unchanging, imperishable, unalterable, secret, mysterious, hidden, concealed, immovable, steady and constant, hence you are honoured by the epithet Kutastha[6]. You are un-manifested, attributeless, formless and beyond description, you are beyond the reach of speech, sight and other perceptions, hence you are called Avyakta[7]. You are that supreme Purush who has established the laws and regulation that govern the functioning of the cosmos (i.e., you are the Viraat Purush in his manifestation as Vishnu and Brahma who are the two divine Gods who have laid down laws of conduct for the creatures of this world)[8]. I bow most reverentially to that magnificent form of yours[9] (29).

[1]आद्यन्तहीनं, [2]जगदात्मरूपं, [3]विभिन्नसंस्थं, [4]प्रकृतेः, [5]परस्तात्, [6]कूटस्थ, [7]ऽव्यक्तवपुस्तवैव [8]पुरुषाभिधानम्, [9]नमामि रूपं

सर्वाश्रयं सर्वजगन्निधानं सर्वत्रगं जन्मविनाशहीनम् ।
नतोऽस्मि ते रूपमणुप्रभेदमाद्यं महत्त्वे पुरुषानुरूपम् ।।३०।।

You are the shelter, the refuge, the solace, the succour and the final resting place for all[1]. You are the symbolic residence, the home, the dwelling place for the whole world (i.e., you give rest to and are the foundation for the entire creation; the whole world, as it exists, is founded upon you and is supported by you; even as a man goes home to rest at the end of the day, the whole creation finds rest in you at the end of its life cycle)[2]. You have access to all the places in creation; you can go everywhere without any hindrance (because you uniformally pervade the entire world; you are omnipresent and immanent)[3]. You are without a birth and death (i.e., you do not rise

and set like the sun, you are not subject to decay and ruin like other mortal creatures)[4]. I bow most reverentially[5] to your form which is as small and minute as the atom[6], which is eternal and infinite[7], which is glorious, majestic, stupendous, remarkable, marvelous and magnificent[8], and which is manifested as the macrocosmic Viraat Purush of the creation[9]. [That is, your form has such marvelous qualities that it can be as small as the atom representing the Atma of the individual creature, and at the same time, is as vast as the Viraat Purush representing the body of the entire cosmos.] (30)

[1]सर्वाश्रयं, [2]सर्वजगन्निधानं, [3]सर्वत्रगं, [4]जन्मविनाशहीनम्, [5]नतोऽस्मि, [6]ते रूपमणुप्रभेद, [7]माद्यं, [8]महत्त्वे, [9]पुरुषानुरूपम्

प्रकृत्यवस्थं त्रिगुणात्मबीजमैश्वर्यविज्ञानविरागधर्मैः ।
समन्वितं देवि नतोऽस्मि रूपं द्विसप्तलोकात्मकमम्बुसंस्थम् ।।३१।।

You represent Prakriti (Mother Nature— see verse no. 11 also)[1]. You are the seed from where emerges the so called Triguns —the triad of the qualities such as Sat, Raj and Tam which determine the characteristics, the temperaments, habits, inclinations, outlooks, thoughts, conducts and behaviours of all individuals[2] (see also canto 25, verse no. 35). You have Aishwarya (fame, majesty, grandeur, radiance and magnificence) as your divine virtues[3]. You are an auspicious treasury of such virtues as Vigyan —logical and rational knowledge[4], Viraj —renunciation, dispassion, detachment and indifference to the world and its material objects[5], and Dharma —righteousness, propriety, nobility and virtuousness[6] (see also canto 25, verse nos. 148-151). You embody all the 14 Lokas* (worlds) in yourself (i.e., all of them are present in your macrocosmic form)[7] You are present even in the water[8]**. Oh Goddess! I most reverentially bow and prostrate before you and your such a glorious and magnificent form[9] (31).

[1]प्रकृत्यवस्थं, [2]त्रिगुणात्मबीज, [3]मैश्वर्य, [4]विज्ञान, [5]विराग, [6]धर्मैः, [7]द्विसप्तलोकात्मक, [8]मम्बुसंस्थम्, [9]देवि नतोऽस्मि रूपं

[Note :- *The 14 Lokas mentioned here are the following— (i) 7 upper worlds according to Sankhya Shastra represented by the following words Bhu (भूः), Bhuvaha (भुवः), Swaha (स्वः),

Maha (महः), Janaha (जनः), Tapa (तपः), and Satyam (सत्यम्), and (ii) the 7 underworlds according to Padma Puran are the following— Atal (अतल), Vital (वितल), Sutal (सुतल), Rasatal (रसातल), Talatal (तलातल), Mahatal (महातल) and Patal (पाताल).

**The Goddess is depicted as being present in water to indicate the fact that she embodies and represents the life nourishing and sustaining virtues of water as well as the entire marine ecosystem that is a complete world of its own. As science has established, water is the basic, the first and primary element needed to foster life; without water there is no scope for life to exist —either in the macroscopic form or the microscopic form.]

विचित्रभेदं पुरुषैकनाथमनन्तभूतैर्विनिवासितं ते ।
नतोऽस्मिरूपं जगदण्डसंज्ञमशेषवेदात्मकमेकमाद्यम् ।।३२।।

The various distinctions and differences, the different varieties and multiplicities, the myriad secrets and mysteries, the manifold variations of this world are most stupendous, magnificent, remarkable and marvelous to behold[1]. [All of them, each one of them, are one or the other form of yours. Say for example —] There is the Purush (the Viraat, the macrocosmic male who encompasses the entire cosmos)[2], who is the one and the only Lord of creation[3] and who has no end (i.e., who is eternal, infinite and endless)[4]. The various Bhuts (the elements —space, wind, fire, water, earth) are your dwelling places (i.e., you are inherently present in all these Bhuts, and since these Bhuts are the basic ingredients of this creation, you are inherently also present throughout this creation)[5]. You are present in the form of the primordial cosmic egg from which the whole cosmos took shape and finally emerged and evolved into its present form[6]. Nothing remains if you are removed from the cosmos[7]. The Vedas are also one of your forms[8]. You are the primary, most ancient and primordial entity[9]. I most reverentially bow before you and your stupendously marvelous and magnificent form[10] (32).

[1]विचित्रभेदं, [2]पुरुषै, [3]एकनाथ, [4]मनन्त, [5]भूतैर्विनिवासितं, [6]जगदण्डसंज्ञम, [7]मशेष, [8]वेदात्मकमेक, [9]कमाद्यम्, [10]नतोऽस्मिरूपं

स्वतेजसा पूरितिलोकभेदं नमामि रूपं रविमण्डलस्थम् ।
सहस्रमूर्द्धानमनन्तशक्तिं सहस्रबाहु पुरुषं पुराणम् ।

शयानमन्तः सलिले तवैव नारायणाख्यं प्रणतोऽस्मिरूपम् ।।३३।।

You are self illuminated[1]. You fill the world completely form all sides[2] without any discrimination or distinguishing[3]. [In other words, the glorious light and brilliance emanating from you pervades the entire world, symbolically providing it with the glow which dispels the darkness of ignorance). Your radiant form is symbolic of the splendours Sun present in the solar system[4]. You have thousands of heads[5] and are possessed of immeasurable strength, powers and potential[6]. You have thousands of arms[7], and you are the ancient Purush, the primeval Male[8]. You sleep or recline on the water[9] in the form of Narayan (here referring to Vishnu who reclines on a bed made of coiled legendary Sheshnath floating on the surface of the celestial ocean of milk called the Kshir Sagar)[10]. I prostrate myself and reverentially bow before you and your astoundingly marvelous form[11] (33).

[1]स्वतेजसा, [2]पूरितिलोक, [3]लोकभेदं, [4]रूपं रविमण्डलस्थम्, [5]सहस्रमूर्द्धानम, [6]मनन्तशक्तिं, [7]सहस्रबाहु, [8]पुरुषं पुराणम्, [9]शयानमन्तः सलिले, [10]नारायणाख्यं, [11]प्रणतोऽस्मिरूपम् नमामि

दंष्ट्राकरालं त्रिदशाभिवन्द्यं युगान्तकालानलकल्परूपम् ।
अशेषभूताण्ड विनाशहेतुं नमामि रूपं तव कालसंज्ञम् ।।३४।।

Your ferocious and terrible form as Mahakali has fierce and formidable as well as strong and powerful jaws with a row of sharp, pointed teeth[1]. You are honoured, worshipped, revered and adored in all the 3 periods of time —the past, the present and the future times, as well as the 3 phases of life, such as the childhood, the adulthood and old age[2]. Your fierce and formidable form reminds one of the ferocious fire burning during the dooms day[3]. You have no remainder in your wake (i.e., after you, there is nothing left behind)[4]. You are that fearful and terrifying force of creation called death, destruction and annihilation[5] which causes[6] even the primordial cosmic egg to come to decay and destruction without leaving any trace, i.e., you can even terminate this creation even before it has been born; you can abort the whole process without leaving a single sign of its presence anytime you want; you can wipe out everything if you so wish, leaving nothing behind as a

remainder or trace[7]. I bow before such a formidable, horrifying and awe inspiring grand form of yours[8] (34).

[1]दंष्ट्राकरालं, [2]त्रिदशाभिवन्द्यं, [3]युगान्तकालानलकल्परूपम्, [4]अशेष, [5]कालसंज्ञम्, [6]हेतुं, [7]अशेषभूताण्ड विनाश, [8]नमामि रूपं

फणासहस्रेण विराजमानं भुवस्तलेऽधिष्ठितमप्रमेयम् ।
अशेषभारोद्वहने समर्थ नमामि ते रूपनमन्तसंज्ञम् ।।३५।।

You are present as the patron deity of the subterranean world[1] in the form of the legendary thousand hooded serpent (dragon or python) known as Shesh[2]. You are limitless, boundless, endless, measureless and without any parameters, hence you are honoured by the epithet of Aprameya[3]. As the ancient Sheshnath who has no end himself (i.e., who is eternal)[4], you have the ability and competence to bear the burden of the earth and the world. [That is, since Sheshnath is also a manifestation of you divine powers and glories which enable it to bear the burden of the earth and the world, you too can do the same.][5] Your form is symbolic of that legendary Sheshnath who is also known by the term 'Anant', which literally means the one who has no end[6]. One bows before such a glorious form of yours[7] (35).

[1]विराजमानं भुवस्तलेऽधिष्ठित, [2]फणासहस्रेण, [3]मप्रमेयम्, [4]अशेष, [5]भारोद्वहनेसमर्थ, [6]रूपनमन्तसंज्ञम्, [7]नमामि ते

अव्याहतैश्वर्यमयुग्मनेत्रं ब्रह्मात्मतानन्दरसंज्ञमेकम् ।
युगान्तरशेषं दिवि नृत्यमानं तोऽस्मि रूपं तव रुद्रसंज्ञम् ।।३६।।

Your virtues such as fame, majesty, glory, magnificence, nobility and radiance, collectively known as your Aishwarya[1], are without any hindrances or obstacles, i.e., they have nothing to oppose them or stand in their way; they are perfect, immaculate, in their prime and without any doubts to their veracity and authenticity (Avyahat)[2]. You have two types of eyes —one type is the gross eyes through which you see the physical world and the other eye is the eye of wisdom and enlightenment[3]. You are engrossed or submerged in the supreme bliss obtained by self realisation of Brahm[4]. In the heaven, you dance angrily in your fierce form like the dance done by Rudra at the time of dooms day or at the end of a Yug or an era. [This dance is known as 'Tandav' in ancient texts.][5] Oh Goddess!

I reverentially bow before such a magnificent and stunning form of yours[6] (36).

[1]ऐश्वर्य, [2]अव्याहत, [3]युग्मनेत्रं, [4]ब्रह्मात्मतानन्द, [5]रुद्रसंज्ञम् युगान्तरशेषं दिवि नृत्य, [6]तोऽस्मि रूपं तव

प्रहीणशोकं विमलं पवित्रं सुरसुरैरर्चितपादयुग्मम् ।
सुकोमलं देवि! विशालशुभ्रं नमामि ते रूपमिदं नमामि ।।३७।।

You are without any sorrows, grief, agonies and distresses (i.e., these negative traits keep far away from you)[1]. You are pious, clear, uncorrupt, untarnished, untainted, pristine pure, spotless, immaculate, beautiful, attractive and charming[2]. Your twin august, divine and holy lotus-like feet are worshipped, honoured and adored by both the Gods as well as the non-Gods[3]. You are delicate, tender and gentle[4]. You have an auspicious form[5] which is macrocosmic, all-pervading, all-encompassing and colossus[6] (besides being subtle and sublime). Oh Goddess! I most reverentially bow[7] repeatedly before such a glorious and marvelous form of yours[8]' (37).

[1]प्रहीणशोकं, [2]विमलं पवित्रं, [3]सुरसुरैरर्चितपादयुग्मम्, [4]सुकोमलं देवि, [5]शुभ्रं, [6]**विशाल,** [7]नमामि ते नमामि, [8]रूपमिदं

एतावदुक्त्वा वचनं रघुराजकुलोद्वहः ।
सम्प्रेक्षमाणो वैदेहीं प्रांजलिः पार्श्वतोऽभवत् ।।३८।।

The king of the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) said this prayer in honour of the great Goddess. Then he stood humbly with joined hands by the side of Vaidehi (i.e., the daughter of king Videha or king Janak; here referring to Sita) (38).

[Note :- This verse shows that Sita has reverted back to her original form from her ferocious form as Mahakali that she had assumed to kill the 1000-headed Ravana.]

अथ सा तस्य वचनं निशाम्य जगतीपतेः ।
सस्मितं प्राह भर्तारं श्रृणुष्वैकं वचो मम। ।।३९।।

When Sita heard his words, she smiled very pleasantly and graciously, and said to Sri Ram, 'Listen to what I have to say—(39).

गृहीतं यन्मया रूपं रावणस्य वधाय हि ।
तेन रूपेण राजेन्द्र वसामि मानसोत्तरे ।।४०।।

Oh Rajendra (emperor —i.e., Sri Ram)! This ferocious, formidable,

horrifying and awe inspiring form that I had assumed to slay Ravana, I shall stay to the north of Manas[1] with this form (40).

[1]वसामि मानसोत्तरे

[Note :- [1]The word Manas 'मानस' means that which pertains to the mind and heart; it refers to the various thoughts and emotions appearing in the mind and the heart. The word Uttar 'उत्तर' means 'north' as well as 'something that is excellent, best, upwardly mobile, the posterior side of anything, subsequent, after, superior to, a response, an answer, as a consequence'. Hence, the implied meaning of the phrase Manasottar 'मानसोत्तर' is 'I am that exalted and supreme power, that stupendous force which reminds the world that if evil forces do not mend themselves on their own, if righteousness and virtues cannot be restored by trying to counter unrighteousness, inauspiciousness, un-holiness, perversion and un-virtuousness by conventional methods —as attempted by Sri Ram when he tried to subdue Ravana by the conventional method of warfare —then I (the supreme Goddess) am there to tackle them even by unconventional methods. I will get rid of all the evils in this world, represented by the demons, by hook or by crook. So let them beware!'

It also means that the supreme Goddess will live on the northern side of the Mansarovar Lake, on Mt. Kailash, which is located to the north of this lake. This mountain is the mythological abode of Lord Shiva and Parvati. Hence the goddess means to say that she will go back to Mt. Kailash and stay there till the time she is needed to come back and help her devotees. In other words, she tells Sri Ram that she is always accessible to him. She is leaving behind her manifestation Sita to always accompany him, but should he feel the need of the divine Goddess and her stupendous powers as displayed by her in the battlefield, he need not worry, because Sita is always with him and he just needs to tell her and she will do the job for him. This is made clear by the Goddess in the following verse.]

प्रकृत्या नीलरूपस्त्वं लोहितो रावणार्दितः ।
नीललोहितरूपेण त्वया सहवसाम्यहम् ।।४१।।

You (Sri Ram) have a natural light blue complexion (resembling the shade of the sky, because you are a manifestation of the Viraat Purush who pervades in the whole sky)[1]. Being wounded in the fierce battle with Ravana, you have acquired a blood red colour of your complexion (because your body is drenched with blood)[2]. Hence, I shall assume a complexion which is of a composite shade consisting of blue and red colours (i.e., violet)[3] and live with you[4] (41).

[1]प्रकृत्या नीलरूपस्त्वं, [2]लोहितो रावणार्दितः, [3]नीललोहितरूपेण, [4]त्वया सहवसाम्यहम्

[Note :- That is why Sri Ram is depicted in the Purans and mythology as having a dark complexioned skin. It is a composite colour made from the colour of the sky (blue), and the colour of blood (red), a combination which creates the violet hue.]

गृहाण च वरं राम! मत्तो यदभिकांक्षितम् ।
तच्छ्रुत्वा राघवो वीरः प्रतिश्रुत्य गिरौ स्थितिम् ।।४२।।

Oh Sri Ram! Ask any boon or blessing that you wish to have, and I shall give it to you'. When the brave Raghav (Sri Ram) heard these magnanimous and benevolent words of the Goddess, he accepted them (i.e., he accepted the Goddess' request to ask for a boon and accept her as Sita living side by side with him) (42).

भारद्वाजांशभागेन ययाचे परमेश्वरीम् ।
देवि! सीते! महाभागे! दर्शितं रूपमैश्वरम् ।।४३।।

[Sage Valmiki said—] 'Oh Bharadwaj! Sri Ram asked his counterpart (i.e., Sita), 'Oh the supreme Goddess[2]! Oh the Goddess Sita, the fortunate one[3]. You have shown me your supreme, transcendental, divine, holy and sublime form as the Lord of all creation[4] (43).

[1]अंशभागेन, [2]परमेश्वरीम्, [3]देवि! सीते! महाभाग, [4]दर्शितं रूपमैश्वरम्

हृदयान्नापगच्छेत्तदिति मे दीयतां वरः ।
भ्रातरौ मम कल्याणि! वानराः सविभीषणाः ।।४४।।
सेनान्यो मम वैदेहि अयोध्यायोधमुख्यकाः ।
पुनस्ते संगताः सन्तु मया रावणतर्जिताः ।।४५।।

Let this divine and magnificent, most remarkable and stupendously marvelous form of yours never leave my heart. Please give me this boon; please bless me! Oh the auspicious one! My brothers, the

monkeys (the army of Sugriv) along with Vibhishan (and his demon companions of Lanka) (44) and my soldiers and other chieftains and commanders of the army of Ayodhya who have been mortally wounded by Ravana, oh Vaidehi (Sita), let me meet all of them once again' (45). [44-45]

[Note :- It should be noted here that majority of Sri Ram's army was blown away by the Vaye Vyastra shot by Ravana during the battle preceding his direct confrontation with Sri Ram. Prior to that, when the demon army had clashed with Sri Ram's army, thousands of Sri Ram's soldiers were wounded. So the Lord here asks the Goddess to revive them back to life. He also means to say that those who are not visible on the battlefield, about whom he has no information as to where they have gone, let circumstances become favourable so that he can meet them once again.]

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे चाभूदाकाशे दुन्दुभिस्वनः ।
पपात पुष्पवृष्टिश्च रामसीतोपरि द्विज ।।४६।।

Oh Brahmin (i.e., Bharadwaj)! Just at that time, there was a celebratory noise of the beating of the kettle drums in the sky. Flowers rained down upon Sri Ram and Sita from the heavens as the Gods celebrated the occasion (46).

प्रहस्य सीता पुनराह रामं तथेपि रामोऽपि विरिंचिमुख्यान् ।
स तान्विसृज्य प्रतिगृह्य सीतां गन्तुं स्वकं देशमसावियेष ।।४७।।

Sita said most cheerfully, with an exhilarant heart, to Sri Ram, 'Let it be so!' Then Sri Ram bid farewell to Brahma and other Gods who were watching the proceedings from the sky, and made preparations to go back to his own country (Ayodhya) along with Sita (47).

Thus ends Canto 26 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing Sri Ram's prayer to Sita as the supreme Goddess, her reverting back from her ferocious form as Mahakali to her original calm, pleasant, graceful, dignified and auspicious form, her blessing Sri Ram, the celebration of the Gods, and the couple's preparations to go back to Ayodhya.

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Canto 27
Epilogue
Sri Ram's arrival at Ayodhya, his coronation; conclusion of Ramayan; the benefits of hearing, reading, preaching and discussing it; the genesis of the story and its summary

This is the last and concluding canto of this Adbhut Ramayan. It tells about Sri Ram's arrival back into this city of Ayodhya, his narration of the evens at Pushkar, such as the slaying of Ravana, to his kith and kin, and then biding good bye to the monkeys and demons lead by Sugriv and Vibhishan respectively. The benefits and rewards of reading, hearing, discussing and preaching this version of Sri Ram's divine story as described along with its genesis and how it was revealed in this world, are then described. Finally, in 8 verses, from verse nos. 23 till 30, the entire story has been outlined in brief.

Verse no. 19 and 23 tells us that this version of Ramayan, called the Adbhut Ramayan, is also known by the name of 'Adbhuttotar Kandam'. I have explained the implications of this phrase as a note to verse no. 19.

रामस्तु पुष्करारूढः सीतामलिंग्य बाहुना ।
अयोध्यामगमद्वीरः काकुत्स्थकुलनन्दनः ।।१।।

Sri Ram got on the Pushpak plane along with Sita and embraced her affectionately. The son of the Kakustha clan (Sri Ram) then headed home to Ayodhya (1).

रथतेमिस्वनं श्रुत्वा रामदर्शनलालसाः ।
भ्रातरो भरताद्यास्ते योधमुख्याश्च ते तथा ।।२।।
राममागतामाज्ञाय ससीतं सऋषिवृजम् ।
प्रणेमुः सहसागत्य आनन्दाश्रुकणाकुलाः ।।३।।

Hearing the sound of the Pushpak plane in the sky over Ayodhya, Bharat and other brothers accompanied by the chief warriors who were all anxious and eager to have a divine glimpse of their Lord Sri Ram (2) realised that he has come along with Sita and other

sages[1]. They eagerly and spontaneously rushed forward to meet them with tears of joy welling up in their eyes. They bowed most reverentially and affectionately before Sri Ram (3). [2-3]

[1]ससीतं सऋषिवृजम

[Note :- After Ravana had flung away the entire army of Sri Ram as described in canto 21, verse no. 6-7, the only people remaining behind were the various sages and seers who had either accompanied Sri Ram from Ayodhya or were present in the sky alongside the Gods to witness the war. This is also evident from verse nos. 12 and 14 of canto 21, verse nos. 50 of canto 22, and verse nos. 1-5 of canto 23.]

वानरान् रक्षसान्सर्वाननय्य स्वपुरं हि सः ।
सर्वं तत्कथायामास रामः कमललोचनः ।।४।।

Sri Ram brought along all the monkeys and demons (the army's of Sugriv and Vibhishan respectively) inside his royal place and described to them the entire episode of how Ravana was killed (4).

[Note :- We must note here that the monkeys of Sugriv and the demons of Vibhishan were not present in the battlefield at Pushkar during the final moments of Ravana's death and the events that sequentially followed his killing, because Ravana had used the weapon known as 'Vaye Vyastra' and had flung all of them away from the battlefield in one powerful blast of air, making them land in Ayodhya, or get scattered to different places —see canto 21, verse no. 6-7.]

तच्छुत्वा विस्मिताः सर्वे साधुसाध्विति वादिनः ।
सीतां तत्त्वेन विज्ञाय रामं च मधुसूदनम् ।।५।।
तदेवं चिन्तयन्तस्ते स्वं स्वं स्थानं ययुर्मुदा ।
विसृष्टा रामभद्रेण सान्त्वपूर्वं महात्मना ।।६।।

Hearing the details, they were amazed and hailed the victory, paying great tributes to the heroic deeds of Sri Ram. Realising the essential divine form of Sita as the divine Goddess and that of Sri Ram as Madhusudan (and epithet for Vishnu) (5), they pondered over this great mystery and discussed about it amongst themselves as they made their way back to their respective homes. The gentleman Sri Ram[1] dismissed or bid farewell to those great souls called Mahatma[2]

with great respect and honour (6). [5-6]

[1]रामभद्रेण, [2]महात्मना

ऋषयश्चाभिनन्द्यैनं ससीतं रघुनन्दनम् ।
आशीर्भिर्वर्धयामासुर्ययुश्चापि यथागतम् ।।७।।

The sages and seers honoured and blessed Raghunandan (literally the son of the Raghu's clan; here meaning Sri Ram) along with Sita with enhanced auspiciousness, fame, glory and welfare. Then they also went their way (7).

रामोऽपि सीतया सार्द्धं भ्रातृभिश्च महात्मभिः ।
चक्रे निष्कण्टकां पृथ्वीं देवानां च महद्धितम् ।।८।।

Sri Ram, helped by Sita and his noble and virtuous great brothers, made the earth free from any 'thorns' in the form of evil demons, for the benefit of the Gods and the entire creation. [That is, after becoming king Emperor, Sri Ram ensured that no evil forces remained on the earth in his realm. He made sure that there was all round peace and tranquility everywhere, and all the tormenting forces for which the word 'thorn' has been used in the text were removed and thrown away.] (8)

यज्ञान् बहुविधांश्चक्रे सरयूतीर उत्तमे ।
दशवर्षसहस्राणि दशवर्षशतानि च ।।
किंचिदभ्यधिकं चैव रामो राज्यमकारयत् ।।९।।

He performed numerous religious sacrifices on the banks of the river Saryu. In this way, Sri Ram ruled for a little more than 11,000 years[1] (9).

[1]दशवर्षसहस्राणि दशवर्षशतानि

देवकिन्नरगन्धर्वा विद्याधरमहोरगाः ।
रामं नमन्ति सततं गुणारामं रमापतिम् ।।१०।।

The Gods, Kinnars (demi-Gods who have heads like that of a horse; they are celestial singers and dancers), Gandharvas (a type of demi-God who is a celestial musician), Vidyadhars (another type of demi-God who is considered senior and more wise than the Gandharvas and Kinnars) and great legendary serpents always bowed before Sri Ram to pay their respects to him who was a treasury of all good virtues and auspiciousness (10).

एतत्ते कथितं भद्रे भारद्वाज महामते ।

तेषु किंचिदिहाश्चर्यमुक्तं रामकथाश्रयम् ।।११।।

Oh wise and gentleman Bharadwaj! I have described all this for your sake. Sri Ram's stories, describing his marvelous deeds, are numerous in number. Out of them, I have described only a selected version, a part of the myriad versions, which seemed most astonishing, most fascinating, most mysterious and strange to me (11).

सर्वं न वक्तुमिच्छामि पुररुक्तिभयाद्द्विज ।
ब्रह्मणा गोपितं तच्च अतोऽपि न तदुक्तवान् ।।१२।।

For the fear of repetition, I am not able to tell or describe everything in detail. Brahma, the creator, had kept it concealed as a secret (in his heart), that is why I hadn't described it to you earlier (12).

[Note :- This verse explains why Valmiki has skipped all the major events normally associated with any version of Ramayan and has concentrated instead only on those points which were hitherto untold by anyone in any of the versions in this world. I have emphasised this point in the preface also.]

अद्भुतोत्तरकाण्डे तत्कथितं वेदसम्मितम् ।
श्रृणोत्यधीते यश्चैतत्स ब्रह्म परमाप्नुयात् ।।१३।।

In this way, this story which is at once most astounding and amazing as well as is in accordance with the Vedas has been described in these cantos. Those who read it or hear it are able to attain the supreme abode of the transcendental Brahm (13).

श्लोकमेकं तदर्घं वा श्रृणुयाद्यच्च मानवः ।
प्रातर्मध्याह्नयोगे वा स याति परमां गतिम् ।।१४।।

Those people who hear one or more of its Slokas (verses or hymns) get emancipation and salvation which is similar to the one achieved by an ascetic who does severe meditation (Yoga) in the morning and at noon[1] (14).

[1]प्रातर्मध्याह्नयोगे

पंचविंशतिसाहस्रं रामायणमधीत्य यत् ।
फलमाप्नोति पुरुषस्तदस्य श्लोकमात्रतः ।।१५।।

The benefit or reward that is received by reading 25,000 Ramayans is got by merely by reading one verse of this Ramayan (15).

[Note :- This is obviously an exaggeration and a hyperbole. The more practical meaning is that the rewards one gets by

reading this Ramayan once is equivalent to reading all the other versions of the epic story. This is just to stress its importance. See also verse no. 17 and 18 in this context.]

न श्रुतं नाप्यधीतं वा येना श्रुतमिदं द्विज ।
स गर्भान्नि:सृतो नैव यथा भ्रूणस्तथैव स: ।।१६।।

Those who have neither had the good fortune of hearing it or reading it are as good as the embryo which has not come out of the womb. [That is, if a child does not take birth and the embryo dies while still inside the mother's womb, it will be of no use. Similarly, a person who has been born in this world and who does not hear this Ramayan even once in this life time, his being alive is useless, and his life is said to be fruitless.] (16)

रामायणमिदं श्रुत्वा न मातुर्जठरे विशेत् ।
वेदाश्चत्वार एकत्र तुलया चेदमेकत: ।।१७।।
विधात्रा तुलितं शास्त्रं सर्वदेवाग्रतो द्विज ।
इदं तु सर्ववेदेभ्यो गौरवादतिरिच्यते ।।१८।।

One has not to enter the womb of a mother again after hearing this Ramayan (i.e., a person who reads or hears this Ramayan is spared from the torments associated with taking birth again in this world and suffering from the horrors of lying in the dark, dingy and filthy womb of the mother)[1]. When the creator and the maker of destiny, i.e., Lord Brahma who is called Vidhatra because of his this function[2], kept this Ramayan on one side of the scale and weighed it against all the 4 Vedas in front of the Gods who acted as witness, he found the former's 'Gaurav'[3] or its glory, prestige, eminence, honour, grandeur, magnificence, impact, importance and significance, stateliness and majesty, powers, potent and authority, to be far greater than that of all the 4 Vedas put together[4]. [That is, the balance tilted in the favour of this Ramayan when it was weighed against the Vedas.] (17-18)

शक्राय स्वर्णदीतीरे पुरा पृष्ठोऽहमब्रुवम् ।
तदेव तव चाख्यातमद्भुतोत्तरकाण्डकम् ।।१९।।

I had first described this Ramayan to Indra, and at his request on the banks of the golden river. It is the same 'Adbhuttotar Kandam'[1] that I have narrated to you (as the present Adbhut Ramayan) (19).

[Note :- The phrase 'Adbhuttotar Kandam' 'अद्भुतोत्तरकाण्डम्' has 3 parts— (a) Adbhut, (b) Uttarotar, and (c) Kanda. The 1st word 'Adbhut' means strange, mysterious, fantastic, fascinating, unprecedented, marvelous, remarkable, magnificent, incredulous, incredible and stupendous. The word 'Uttar' means answer, a reply, something which is consequential or a result of some previous deed, later, most exalted and superior. The 2nd word 'Uttarotar' therefore means something that is better than Uttar. Here it means the most excellent answer to the question asked by a disciple. It also means the narration of an event that is most excellent, super and magnificent, the like of which has not happened before. And the last 3rd word 'Kandam' means an act, a deed, an event, an episode, a happening or an action, in context of a book, a chapter.

Hence, this Ramayan depicts or describes the hitherto unknown but most excellent and magnificently remarkable yet incredulous and incredible secrets and mysterious events and happening that took place in the later part of Sri Ram's life after he had killed the Ravana of Lanka. These events or episodes are revealed only when someone showed his earnest desire to learn about them or when he asked a question regarding those events, not before. They were disclosed as an answer (Uttar—) to the query. In the present case, it was Indra who had asked the question for the purpose of its 1st disclosure as 'Adbhuttotar Kandam', and for the purpose of this book called Adbhut Ramayan, the questioner was sage Bharadwaj who was the 2nd questioner.]

रामायणं महारत्नं ब्रह्महृत्क्षीरधावभूत् ।
नारदान्त: समासाद्य क्रमान्मम हृदि स्थितम् ।।२०।।

This Ramayan is like a gem which was present in the ocean of milk called Kshir Sagar represented by Brahmaa's heart. Then it was transferred to the bosom or heart of Narad, the celestial sage, and from there it came to my heart. [That is, Brahma first narrated this story to Narad, who in turn told Valmiki about it. Then Valmiki described it to Indra for the benefit of Gods, and then later on to

Bharadwaj for the benefit of humans.] (20)

तत्सर्वं ब्रह्मणो लोके नि:शेषमवतिष्ठते ।
किंचिदुर्व्यां च पाताले त्रिदिवे शुक्रसन्निधौ ।।२१।।

The entire story of the divine deeds and events as described in Ramayan are located or stored in Brahm-Loka (the abode of Brahma, the patriarch of creation). Some of the versions are available on earth and in the subterranean or nether world, and some are with Indra (the king of Gods) in the heaven (21).

विरंचिर्नारदोऽहं च त्रय एवास्य पारगा: ।
चतुर्थो नोपपद्यते बुद्ध्वेदं सुस्थिरो भव ।।२२।।

Brahma, Narad and me (Valmiki) —we are the only three who know it thoroughly. Be certain that there is no fourth person with this great reach and the requisite depth of knowledge that we three have (22).

यदुक्तमद्भुते काण्डे पुनस्ते कथयाम्यहम् ।
श्रीरामजन्मवृत्तान्त: श्रीमतीचरितं महत् ।।।२३।।

Whatever has been said and described in this Ramayan known as ‘Adbhuttotar Kandam’ (see note to verse no. 19 above) is being briefly listed for your convenience now by me. Listen carefully— Sri Ram’s birth, the great episode pertaining to Srimati, (23),

दण्डकारण्यकस्थानां शोणितेन महात्मनाम् ।
नारदस्य च शापेन लक्ष्म्याश्चैवपाराधत: ।।२४।।
मन्दोदरीगर्भनिष्ठा वैदेही जन्म चोक्तवान् ।
रामस्य विश्वरूपं च भार्गवेण च वीक्षितम् ।।२५।।

The episode pertaining to 10-headed Ravana’s extracting blood from the sages and seers living in the Dandkaranya forest; the curse of sage Narad and the demeanours of Laxmi (24) that led to the birth of Sita as Vaidehi from the womb of Mandodari (the wife of 10-headed Ravana); Sri Ram showing Bhargav (sage Parashuram) his macrocosmic, all-encompassing colossus form as Viraat Purush, (25). [24-25]

ऋष्यमूके हनुमता चतुर्बाहूरघूत्तम: ।
दृष्टो भिक्षुस्वरूपेण सुग्रीवसख्यमुक्तवान् ।।२६।।

Near Mt. Rishyamook, the most exalted Raghav (Sri Ram) showed his 4-armed divine form (as Vishnu, the sustainer and the 2nd of the Trinity Gods) to Hanuman when the latter appeared before him disguised as a mendicant or monk to find out who Sri Ram was and why he had come. Then a bond of friendship was made with Sugriv (the king of monkeys) (26).

लक्ष्मणांगजतापेन शोषणं वारिधे: पुन: ।
प्राप्तराज्यस्य रामस्य मुनीनां सन्निधौ तथा ।।२७।।
सीताया: कथनं श्रुत्वा सहस्रास्यस्य रक्षस: ।
मानसोत्तरशैलेन्द्रे स्थितिं ज्ञात्वा रघुद्वह: ।।२८।।

The ocean was tormented by the immense heat produced from the body of Laxman (when he had jumped in it to dry the water so that Sri Ram’s army could cross the ocean). Sri Ram got back to Ayodhya (after conquering Lanka and slaying the 10-heded Ravana) and regained his kingdom and crown. Then he heard the story of the 1000-headed Ravana of Pushkar, who was the elder brother of the 10-headed Ravana, from Sita in the presence of the assembled sages and seers who had come to praise him for his victory in Lanka. Sri Ram came to know about the place where this Ravana lived —it was on a mountain range to the north of Manas, in the city of Pushkar (27-28).

जगाम पुष्करद्वीपं भ्रातृभि: सह वानरै: ।
सीताया ऐश्वरं रूपं रावणस्य वधस्तथा ।।२९।।

Sri Ram then goes on a mission to Pushkar island (or a small continent) accompanied by his brothers and the monkey army of Sugriv (to conquer and kill this 1000-headed Ravana). Sita also accompanies him. She shows her divine form as the great Goddess of the world (i.e., Goddess Mahakali) and then she slays that 1000-headed Ravana (after Sri Ram had failed to subdue him and lay wounded in the battlefield) (29).

अयोध्यागमनं रामस्यैष वृत्तान्तसंग्रह: ।
वृत्तान्तसंग्रहं चापि पाठित्वा रामभक्तिमान् ।।
जायते मुनिशार्दूल नात्र कार्या विचारणा ।।३०।।

Then Sri Ram returns to Ayodhya. This narration is a collection of all these major events or episodes outlined above[1]. A person is inspired and drenched and soaked with devotion for Sri Ram when or if he reads this compendium[2]. Oh the lion amongst sages (i.e.,

oh the one who is the senior most and the most exalted amongst the sages and seers —here referring to sage Bharadwaj)[3]. There is no doubt about it (30).

[1]वृत्तान्तसंग्रहः, [2]वृत्तान्तसंग्रहं चापि पाठित्वा, [3]मुनिशार्दूल

पठेच्च यो रामचरित्र मेतत्पुनाति पापात्सुकृतं लभेत ।
तीर्थाभिषेकं समरे जयं च स सर्वयज्ञस्य महत्फलं च ।।३१।।

Anyone who reads this Ramayan called 'Ram Charitra' (literally meaning the divine and glorious deeds done by Sri Ram in this world which depicts his divine character and great virtues) is liberated and delivered from sins and their effects. He gets auspiciousness and the reward of doing numerous virtuous, noble, auspicious and good deeds. He also gets the rewards or benefits of offering water or milk to deities at pilgrim sites, fame of getting victory in war, and the beneficial effect of doing all the religious rites and fire sacrifices as ordained by the scriptures (31).

भजेत यो राममचिन्त्यरूपमेकेन भावेन च भूमिपुत्रीम् ।
एतत्सुपुण्यं श्रृणुयात्पठेद्वा भूयो भवेन्नो जठरे जनन्याः ।।३२।।

A person who worships, adores, constantly contemplates and meditates upon, thinks about and concentrates his mind and heart on the form of Sri Ram as the divine, sublime, transcendental Supreme Being who is beyond the realm, reach and purview of thought, contemplation, comprehension and understating[1], does so by worshipping the 'daughter of the earth', who is Sita herself and no one else[2]. [That is, in order to worship Sri Ram, one has to worship Sita as his divine consort. In other words, worshipping of Sita is a path leading to the doorway of worshipping Sri Ram. Worship of Sita as the divine Goddess is the first step of worshipping of the Lord God himself. Worshipping of Sita is equivalent to worshiping Sri Ram, and vice versa.] A person who reads and hears this holy scripture does not have to come back and enter a mother's womb again, and therefore he gets the ultimate emancipation and salvation (which is known as Param Pad wherein the devotee of the Lord finds his Lord and stays with him to serve his divine, holy and august feet forever) (32).

Thus ends Canto 27 of the ancient epic called Adbhut Ramayan written by sage Valmiki describing Sri Ram's return to Ayodhya. It lists the different benefits got by hearing and reading this Ramayan and describes the genesis of the story. It also summarises the major events in the story.

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Appendix no. 1
Sage Valmiki—his Life and Works; A Pen-Portrait

The venerable sage Valmiki was the author of the twin epics 'Ramayan' and 'Adbhut Ramayan'. His dexterous handling of the epic story of Sri Ram, his astute eye for details and a sharp intellect, his profound wisdom and erudition, his ability to transcendent the boundaries of time and limitations of words, resulted in a repository of knowledge that weaved in its fine texture of the time-tested storytelling method the greatest of spiritual, metaphysical and theological maxims and axioms, the profoundest of noble ideas and virtues that epitomises the essence of the Vedas and all other scriptures taken together. In fact, as we shall see in this appendix, Valmiki has even conceptualised 99th Sukta (hymn) consisting of 12 verses or Richas or Slokas in the 10th division of the Rig Veda. Besides this, Valmiki has also been known as the 24th 'Veda Vyas', or a scholarly preacher who has classified the Vedas, compiled the Upanishads and wrote the different Purans. As a preacher and scholarly commentator of the Vedas, i.e., as Veda Vyas, he was known by the name of 'Riksha'. This fact is mentioned in Vishnu Puran, Chapter 3, verse no. 11-21. Pertinent portions are discussed below in this appendix.

But first let us have a broad outline of the stories related to his lineage and birth, and how he came to me known as 'Valmiki'.

He was **born** as a Brahmin in the Gotra (lineage or family) of sage Angira. His earlier name was Ratnakar. There are many versions available about his early life before he became famed and renowned as the great sage by the name of Valmiki. Some of the various versions about his early life in brief are as follows:-

(a) According to Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas (Krishna Dwepayan Veda Vyas of the current era of the 4-Yug cycle), Ayodhya Kand, canto 6, verse nos. 65-87, the sage himself describes to Sri Ram, when the latter came to pay visit to the sage's hermitage at Chitrakoot, about his early life. Valmiki tells Sri Ram that he was born a Brahmin and married a tribal women belonging

to the Kiraat tribe who were forest dwelling mountain folks living on the eastern fringes of the Himalayas. From her he begot many sons. To maintain his family, he used to rob and kill travelers. Once he targeted and waylaid the celestial seven sages who decided to amend him. They asked the bandit Ratnakar to enquire from his family if they would share the result of accumulated sins that he has committing for their sake by waylaying and robbing innocent travelers. The family members told him that they wouldn't, for they were only interested in food and comfort that he could provide for them. Chastened and stunned, Ratnakar was so shocked that he immediately became extremely remorseful and contrite. He rushed back to the sages and fell at their feet, asking for forgiveness, seeking repentance and atonement for his evil deeds. As is the wont of pious saints, the sages discussed among themselves an easy method for his salvation, and that was to do 'Japa' (constant repetition of some holy word) of the 'Tarak Mantra' (which is a liberation and deliverance providing divine word), i.e., the divine word 'Ram'. But since Ratnakar was so horribly sinful and he couldn't pronounce the word straight, the sages advised him to repeat it incessantly backwards as 'Mara' which automatically transformed into 'Ram' after the first utterance, because 'Mara' is a mirror image of the word 'Ram' in Hindi. Ratnakar sat in deep meditation and his body was covered in an anthill called 'Valmik' in Sanskrit. When the sages returned to him after a long period of 1000 Yugs [1 Yug = a very long period of time; approximately 12 years, but generally used to denote one phase of the 4 phase celestial cycle consisting of Sat, Treta, Dwapar and Kali; at least 12 x 1000 = 12000 years], they woke him up, and regarding this new life of his as his symbolic second birth, they renamed Ratnakar as Valmiki because the now-transformed man emerged from an anthill. [An English version of Adhyatma Ramayan has been published separately by this author.]

(b) Four different versions are available in Skand Puran. They are briefly summarised as follows:- (i) Skand Puran, Avanti Khand (volume), section 5, Chapters 24-25 say that he was a Brahmin named Sumati in the clan of sage Bhrigu. His wife was named Kaushiki. They had a son named Agnisharma. Inspite of the

best efforts of the father, the son would not study and not become educated in the scriptures as his father wanted him to be. Instead he remained a wayward fool. Once there was a famine and Sumati moved to the south of India with his family. There, Agnisharma joined a band of bandits. Then the story follows the same pattern as the one described in Adhyatma Ramayan, except that he was advised by sage Atri instead of the 7 celestial sages to contemplate and meditate upon the Ram Mantra, in a meditative process called 'Dhyan Yoga'. Agnisharma remained in a trance-like state of Samadhi for 13 years, after which the 7 sages came and renamed him as Valmiki after the anthill which had formed over his unmoving body during his period of Samadhi. Then sage Valmiki, who was earlier known as Agnisharma, went to a place called 'Kush' and meditated upon Lord Shiva who blessed him with the intellectual prowess as an erudite and scholarly poet, a wise seer and enlightened scholar, enabling him to compose the twin epics 'Ramayan' and 'Adbhut Ramayan'. It is because of Valmiki's worship of Lord Shiva and acquiring the acumen and competency to describe the Ramayan that the Shivlingam (the symbol of Lord Shiva) at Avantika is known as 'Valmikeshwar', literally meaning the lord of Valmiki, a reference to Lord Shiva.

We must note that sage Atri advised Agnisharma to contemplate upon the Mahamantra (the great divine word) which is 'Ram', and repeat it incessantly with full concentration, which is called Dhyan or meditation. Atri told him that it had the potential to destroy the greatest and gravest of sins. So Agnisharma sat under a tree and meditated so fixedly that an anthill was formed around his body.

तथेत्युक्त्वाथ तान् प्राह अग्निं ध्यानं समाचर ।
अनेन ध्यानयोगेन महामन्त्रजपेन च ।।
अनेकदुस्तरात्युग्रपापकृज्जनघातकः ।
संस्थितो वृक्षमूले त्वं परां सिद्धिं गमिष्यसि ।।२६—२७।।

(ii) Skand Purna, Vaishnav Khand, Chapter 18, verse no. 35-80 in the section dealing with the importance and significance of the month of 'Vaishak' (the second Hindu holy month, roughly April), the story of the 3 consecutive births of Valmiki have been

described. Briefly it is as follows— In ancient time, in the city of Shakal, in the Gotra (linage) called Srivatsa (who claimed to be descendants of Lord Vishnu, who is also known by this name), there was a learned Brahmin named Stumb (स्तम्ब) who was an expert in the Vedas. He was married to a faithful wife but fell in love with a low caste women called Ganika. Once he suffered from fistula because he used to eat radish and drink buffalo milk together. All his wealth dried up in the treatment of this disease. That mistress of his (Ganika) abandoned him in his bad times, leaving him to be served by his loyal and faithful wife. Once it so happened that sage Deval passed that way. The wife informed her husband about the arrival of a great medicine man, because she new that her husband would not welcome any sage. So, in the mistaken belief that the sage was a doctor, he was duly welcomed, worshipped and honoured. The wife washed his feet and offered the washed water to her husband, telling him that it was the medicine prepared for him to cure the disease. Meanwhile, Stumb, whose condition had deteriorated, was thinking of his lover and, in his stupor, he bit the fingers of his wife as she tried to put the water (disguised as medicine) into his mouth. He died with that finger-end in his mouth. This resulted in his taking a birth as a hunter (Vyadh).

In his second birth, this hunter called Vyadh (a tormentor and killer) became very cruel, waylaying and killing travelers and cutting off their fingers to keep count. Once this Vyadh waylaid sage Sankh who lived on the banks of river Pampa in south India and had gone to rive Godavari to take a holy bath, and from there had gone to Kantkachal forest to do penance. It was a hot summer afternoon, and the bandit Vyadh snatched all the sage's clothes as well as his slippers. The sage's feet roasted on hot ground and he was greatly distressed. Due to the effect of one single good deed done in his previous life as Stumb, when he was made to drink the water used to wash the feet of sage Deval, mercy sprouted in his heart, and he returned the footwear to sage Sankh. The sage talked with him, and the sage's company brought about a change in the heart of Vyadh, the hunter. He realised his follies and sought the sage's guidance for his emancipation and salvation. This episode

occurs in Chapter 17, verse nos. 8-20 of Vaishak Khand of Skand Puran. Observing that with this sinful body the man would not be able to do anything worthwhile, the sage decided on the simplest of means for salvation— repeating and meditating upon the holy, salvation providing Mantra, 'Ram'. He told the Vyadh that due to its good effects, he will take another (third) birth in the hermitage of one sage named Valmik, and would thenceforth be renowned as his son 'Valmiki' (literally meaning one belonging to the family of Valmik). After this advice, sage Shankh went his way to the south.

तस्माद् रामेति तन्नाम जप व्याध निरन्तरम् ।
धर्मानेतान् कुरु व्याध यावदामरणान्तिकम् ।।
ततस्ते भविता जन्म वल्मीकस्य ऋषेः कुले ।
वाल्मीकिरिति नाम्ना च भूमौ ख्यातिं गमिष्यसि ।।
इति व्याधं समादिश्य प्रतस्थे दक्षिणां दिशम् ।
(अध्याय २१, श्लोक ४८—५७)

It so happened that a sage named Krinu (कृणु) did penance for a long time, without moving, on the banks of river Pampa. An anthill developed on his motionless body. The local population used to call him Valmik because of this anthill. After finishing his Tapa (penance and austerity), he once heard some beautiful and lustful women talking with each other, and this caused him to ejaculate. His sperms were accepted by a woman of the dancing tribe called 'Nat', and her name was Shailushi (शैलूषी). The son produced from her was known as Valmiki. This part of the story appears in Chapter 21, verse nos. 64-68 of this section of the Skand Puran as mentioned above.

(iii) Skand Puran, Nagar Khand, Chapter 124, in the section dealing with the importance of Hatkeshwar, has this version of the birth of Valmiki— there was a Brahmin named Lohajang (लोहजंग) in the clan of Mandavya of Chamatkarpur. Though he used to faithfully serve his parents (i.e., he was a righteous and honourable man), due to some adverse circumstances and famine, he became a robber in order to sustain the family. Once he came in contact with the 7 celestial sages. The rest of the story follows the pattern as described in Adhyatma Ramayan (see serial no. a). A jovial sage named Pulaha advised him to repeat (do Japa) a 4-letter meaningless word

'Jatghot' (जाटघोट) just to poke fun at Lohajang because he thought that such a sinful person can never sincerely do Japa of a real Mantra. He must be surely joking, so thought the sage.

जाटघोटेति मन्त्रोऽयं सर्वसिद्धिपदायकः ।
तमेनं जप विप्रं त्वं दिवारात्रमतन्द्रितः ।।
(अध्याय १२४, श्लोक ६४)

Sage Pulaha told Lohajang, 'The word 'Jatghot' is a great Mantra and it has the potential to provide all success and mystical powers. So, oh Brahmin, you should repeat it day and night incessantly' (chapter 124, verse no. 64). The point to note here is that the word 'Jatghot' is a meaningless jumble of words. But nevertheless it was Lohajang's sincerity and firm faith in the sage's advice —that what a teacher advices is indeed true and there should be no question about its potential to provide salvation— that made this worthless combination of letters acquire powers which rivaled the actual great mantra 'Ram' in its potentials of providing emancipation and salvation. The rest of the story follows the usual pattern as described above in serial number (a) regarding Adhyatma Ramayan.

(iv) Skand Puran, Prabhas Khand, Chapter 278 has a different version as follows— there was a Brahmin named Shamimukh (शमिमुख). His son Vaishakh (वैशाख) became a dacoit to meet the needs of his family. He met the 7 sages and the rest of the story is similar to Nagar Khand version (as described in serial no. iii above). The only difference is that here the 4 letter Mantra was 'Jhatghot' (झाटघोट) instead of 'Jatghot' (जटघोट).

(c) In another Ramayan known as 'Tattwa Sangraha Ramayan' (तत्त्व संग्रह रामायण) the story is similar to the one in Adhyatma Ramayan except that the 7 celestial sages, when they were undecided as to what path of salvation should be prescribed to the bandit, were advised by an invisible divine voice from the sky to prescribe 'Mara' word as the Mantra to the bandit who was later to become Valmiki.

(d) The story described in 'Anand Ramayan' is similar to the one described in Skand Puran, Vaishnav Khand as detailed in serial no. b (ii). The only variation occurs regarding his third birth. Here, in the Anand Ramayan version, the sperms came out from sage Krinu's eyes (in the form of his tears) and they were accepted by some female

serpent from whom Valmiki was born. Being an orphan, he was brought up by the Kiraat tribe (see serial no. a above). It was because of this raising that he became a robber. He was finally liberated when he met the 7 sages.

(e) 'Krittivas Ramayan' has a different twist to his ancestry. It says that Ratnakar, the Vyadh or hunter, was a son of sage Chyawan (च्यवन) and his salvation was brought about by the teachings of Brahma, the creator, and Narad, the celestial sage. The story in brief in this— Ratnakar was born in the Gotra (lineage, family) of sage Angira. From his childhood, Ratnakar was brought up in the company of thugs and robbers. Once he ambushed sage Narad who told him that killing and robbing innocent people was an unpardonable and horrible sin. Why does he do it? Ratnakar's reply and his subsequent renunciation follows the same pattern as described by Veda Vyas in Adhyatma Ramayan (see serial no. a above). The only variation here is that Narad was the one who showed the path of salvation to Ratnakar instead of the 7 celestial sages. Brahma, the creator, was so pleased by his severe penances and austerities (Tapa) that he came to him, sprinkled some holy water from his Kamandalu (water pot) on the anthill that had formed around Ratnakar's immobile body as he sat in deep meditation. This holy water revived the anthill-covered body, and Brahm christened him as 'Valmiki'—the one who is born from an anthill.

The important point to note here is that Valmiki's scholarship in writing the twin epics— 'Ramayan and Adbhut Ramayan'—was received as a boon when he pleased Lord Shiva (Skand Puran, Avanti Khand, section 5, Chapter 27). It is believed that once Valmiki saw a hunter killing a bird from a pair of male and female. Shocked and grieved at the anguish suffered by the surviving bird upon the death of its companion, Valmiki cursed the hunter and the words of curse came out from his mouth in the form of verses of Sanskrit called 'Chanda', which are perfect poetical style of composition in which the Vedas were narrated. Besides the Vedas, this was the first perfect Chanda pronounced by man, and that is why Valmiki came to be known as 'Adi Kavi' (आदि कवि), i.e., the ancient classical poet.

Further, the father and mother of Valmiki were not necessarily Brahmins, as we have seen from the different versions giving different

parentage of Valmiki.

(f) Sri Nagesh Bhatt, who was a great scholar of Sanskrit grammar, had written a detailed commentary of Valmiki's Ramayan about 400 years ago. In it he writes, 'The ancient poet Valmiki wished to describe something which was the best and most excellent in literature (सर्वोत्तम वस्तु). To obtain the competence to do so, both the ability as well as the selection of subject matter, he did severe Tapa (penance and austerity) and obtained a state of deep Samadhi (which is a trance-like immobile state during meditation). Sage Narad, on divine inspiration and for a divine purpose, appeared before him. When Valmiki asked for something that was 'the best', Narad told him the story of Ramayan in very brief and went his way. For the welfare of the 4 Varnas (i.e., classes of people in the society, such as the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras) and to free them from the 'triad of torments' from which they suffered (called the sufferings from Daihic— torments pertaining to the body, such as diseases; Daivic— torments pertaining to malignant and malevolent Gods and stars; and Bhautic— torments pertaining to the terrestrial world, such as problems created by cruel kings and animals), Valmiki, the grandson of Pracheta (प्रचेता) and son of Praacheta (प्राचेता), composed the epic Ramayan having hundreds of thousands of verses. These verses were in the poetic style called 'Gayatri Chanda' which is a typical style of verse having 24 letters or syllables in all divided into 3 steps having 8 letters or syllables in each step. He taught the sons of Sri Ram, Luv and Kush, the epic Ramayan extending into 24000 hymns.

In the words of Nagesh Bhatt:-

"अथादि कविर्वाल्मीकि: सर्वोत्तमवस्तुवर्णनाय कृतसंकल्पो दिव्य तत्काव्यकृति शक्तिलाभाय" तादृश वस्तु ज्ञानाय च कृतकष्टसमा–धिसाधित परमपुण्यचय:, तत्पुण्यचयसुप्रीतभगवन्नियोगसमुपागतं देवर्षिम्नारदमभ्यच्यं "कोऽन्वस्मिन् साम्प्रतमित्यादिपप्रच्छ । स च देवर्षी रामकथा मुदितमना रामचरितमनुसृत्य संक्षेपत उपदिश्य यथागतं जगाम। ततस्तदनुग्रहलब्धं रामचरितरहस्यं निरवशेषं तत्प्रसादादेव सम्यग्विज्ञाय भूलोकवर्तिनाम् चतुर्णा वर्णानां तापत्रयविमोचनाय ब्रह्मांशभूत एव भगवान् प्राचेतसो वाल्मीकि:

स्वकृत शत कोटि रामायणशारभूतं चतुर्विंशत्यक्षर गायत्र्याख्य परब्रह्मविद्याविलास भूतं रामायणं चतुर्विंशति सहस्रश्लोक रूपं कुशलवाभ्यामग्राहयत् ।

We note that according to this version of Valmiki's life, the reason for doing Tapa was not to repent for his sins but to acquire the supreme knowledge about Brahm and existence as well as erudition that was the 'best', and to be able to create something that would help people to tide over their miserable and mundane existence, and which would give them some refreshing wind of spirituality and help them in their quest for emancipation and salvation. The pattern of story telling was selected by Valmiki because it would have a mass appeal as opposed to dry philosophical discussion and preaching based on the Upanishads or incantation of the hymns of the Vedas, which a common man could not fathom nevertheless. Indeed, the story of Sri Ram is so captivating and enchanting that even after thousands of years and hundreds of versions and repeated hearings and tellings, its charm has never diminished. Every new reading is as refreshing as if it was being heard for the first time. It has undergone so many changes and adaptations that often there seems to be no correlation between any two versions. For example, the 'Thai version of Ramayan' has many elements incompatible with the Indian versions of Ramayan. This is because the story, once it went to other lands, was quickly assimilated and integrated with the local customs and culture. It in no way demeaned or insinuated the 'holiness and divinity' aspect of the text, but it was more in conformation to local customs and standards. This adaptability made it so acceptable to the various geographical realms of the world. Bigotry would have stifled it; there is no wander in it. As we have just seen, even the Hindu texts which describe Valmiki's birth have different versions and different views, though the fact must have been one. If Valmiki had a particular man as his father, this fact cannot be tinkered with. But it has indeed been done so according to different versions of his parentage as outlined earlier in this appendix.

(g) Valmiki's own epic Ramayan— Ancient sages were not

in the habit of eulogising themselves while writing great texts. So sage Valmiki also hid his lineage and upbringing as far as he could avoid mentioning them. But a brief glimpse appears in Uttar Kand, 96/19 of the epic Ramayan when the sage says on oath at the time of proving Sita's innocence before the royal assembly of Sri Ram— 'प्रचेतसोऽहं दशमः पुत्रो राघवनन्दन । न स्मराम्यनृतं वाक्यम् इमौतु तव पुत्रकौ ।। (रामायण, उत्तरकाण्ड, ९६/१९)' meaning 'Oh the son of Raghu's clan, Sri Ram! I am the 10th son of Pracheta. I do not remember that I have ever told a lie. These two (Luv and Kush) are your sons (and no body else's) (Valmiki's Ramayan, Uttar Kand, 96/19). He says further, 'बहु वर्ष सहस्राणि तपश्चर्या मया कृता । नोपश्नीयां फलन्तस्या दुष्टेयं यदि मैथिली ।। (रामायण, उत्तरकाण्ड, ९६/२०)' meaning 'I have done severe penances for many thousands of years. Let me not benefit from it (or let all of it go in vain) if Sita is unchaste and unrighteous' (Valmiki's Ramayan, Uttar Kand, 96/20). Again he says— 'मनसा कर्मणा वाचा भूतपूर्वं न किल्विषम् । तस्याहं फलमश्नामि अपात्रा यदि मैथिली ।। (रामायण, उत्तरकाण्ड, ९६/२१)', meaning 'I have never committed any sin with my mind, deeds and words even earlier. Let me gain the benefit of its reward (of never committing sin) if Sita is not sinful and corrupt' (Valmiki's Ramayan, Uttar Kand, 96/21).

These verses clearly show the Valmiki was the son of Pracheta, a version which endorses the view expressed by Nagesh Bhatt (see serial no. f above). Further, the fact that he says he has never committed any sin in his life seems contradictory to the established fact that he was a great robber prior to his becoming a saint. But it must be remembered that after doing penances and atoning for his sins, when he had emerged from the anthill, he was deemed to be 'reborn' with a new life and identity; his past was 'shed' life the cuticle of a snake. In his new life as 'sage' Valmiki, he indeed hadn't committed any sin. Endless debates and peeling of skins of onions, as it were notwithstanding, the simple interpretation about his not being a sinner in his earlier life is most plausible.

Valmiki as Veda Vyas:- (h) Vishnu Puran, Chapter 3, verse no. 11-21 lists the name of 29 'Vyas' (व्यास) or preachers who taught the scriptures, expounded upon the Vedas, classified them into 4 main branches, compiled the Upanishads and wrote the Purans. It says the in each celestial cycle of four Yugs (eras), a

different Vyas takes birth and he classifies the Vedic text into 4 parts— the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva Vedas. Sage Parashar says to Maitreya that 'after him (the 23rd Vyas named Trinbindu), a sage named 'Riksha' (ऋक्ष) became Veda Vyas. He is known as Valmiki now' (Vishnu Puran, 3/3/18)— **'ऋक्षोऽभूद भार्गवस्तस्माद् वाल्मीमीकिर्योऽभिधीयते । (विष्णु पुराण, ३/३/१८)'**

The word 'Riksha' (ऋक्ष) used in the verse is the name given to the 24th Veda Vyas by his father; while Valmiki is the name which 'Riksha' acquired after his body was covered by an anthill during his severe Tapa and meditation.

(i) This version of Valmiki being one of the 29 Veda Vyases who had classified the Veda into 4 parts is also endorsed in Vayu Puran— **'परिवर्ते चतुविंशे ऋक्षो व्यासो भविष्यति । (वायु पुराण, ३३/१६४)'** which means 'in the 34th 4-Yug cycle, there would be a Vyas (a preacher) named 'Riksha' (Vayu Puran, 33/164).

(j) Kurma Puran is very explicit on this matter. It says **'तृणबिन्दुस्त्रयोविंशे वाल्मीकिस्तुततः परम्, (कुर्म पुराण)'**, which means 'in the 23rd 4 Yug cycle, Trinbindu was the Vyas, while Valmiki was the Vyas after him (in the 24th cycle). [One 4-Yug cycle = 43,20,000 terrestrial years approximately.]

The entire list of all the great sages who were called 'Veda Vyas' down the ages from the hoary past when the creation first came into existence is mentioned in Vishnu Puran, 3rd Chapter, verse no. 11-21. The list of Veda Vyases is as follows—

i. Swayyambhu (स्वायम्भु), ii. Prajapati (प्रजापति), iii. Ushna (उशना), iv. Vrihaspati (वृहस्पति), v. Savita (सविता), vi. Mritu (मृत्यु), vii. Indra (इन्द्र), viii. Vashistha (वशिष्ठ), ix. Saraswat (सारश्वत), x. Tridhama (त्रिधामा), xi. Trishikhi (त्रिशिखी), xii. Bharadwaj-I (भारद्वाज), xiii. Antariksha (अन्तरिक्ष), xiv. Varni (वर्णी), xv. Trayyarun (त्रय्यारुण), xvi. Dhananjay (धनञ्जय), xvii. Kratunjay (क्रतुञ्जय), xviii. Jaya (जय), xix. Bharadwaj-II (भारद्वाज), xx. Gautam (गौतम), xxi. Haryatma (हरयात्मा), xxii. Vajsrawa (वाजश्रवा), xxiii. Trinbindu (त्रिणबिन्दु), **xxiv. Riksha (ऋक्ष)**, (Valmiki, the author of this Adbhut Ramayan, xxv. Shakti (शक्ति), xxvi. Parashar (पराशर), xxvii. Jatukarna (जातुकर्ण), xxviii. Krishna Dwepayan (कृष्ण द्वैपायन), and xxix. Ashwathama (अश्वत्थामा).

(k) It must be noted that all the Veda Vyases had also written

the Purans. Therefore, it is logical to deduce that Valmiki, known also as Riksha, must have written the Purnas too like his other peers, and to extend the logic further, since the Purans were mythological histories and were therefore subject to variations and divergence in the narration of events and the time factor involved depending upon the current condition that prevailed at the time of their individual rendering, the epic story of Sri Ram is also a history, though not so much mythological as the other Purans because of the fact that Valmiki was a contemporary of Sri Ram and it was in his hermitage that Sita was sent in for her second exile and where her two sons, Luv and Kush, were born. So Valmiki's narration was a contemporary history of Sri Ram as compared to other Purans.

Further, Valmiki's lifetime straddled the two Yugs —the later half of Treta and the earlier half of Dwapar (i.e., the 2nd and the 3rd Yugs of the 4-Yug cycle). This fact is corroborated by Brahm-Vaivarta Puran, Prakriti Khand, Chapter 5, in which sage Yagyawalka has stated while praying to the patron Goddess of speech, Goddess Saraswati, as follows— **'व्यासः पुराणसूत्रञ्च पप्रच्छ वाल्मीकं यदा । मौनिभूतः स सस्मार त्वामेव जगदम्बिकाम ।। (१२३) सम्प्राप्यं निर्मलं ज्ञानं प्रमादध्वंस कारणम पुराणसूत्रम्....(१२४)'**. It means 'Oh mother! Once, sage Vyas (Krishna Dwepayan Vyas, the 28th Vyas) asked sage Valmiki about the source of all the Purans. Valmiki closed his eyes in contemplation and remembered (invoked) you. As a result of his remembering you, he got pure wisdom, excellent expertise and superior erudition and knowledge which dispelled all his 'Agyan' (ignorance, lack of wisdom, erudition and knowledge) enabling him to explain the basic tenets, the essential principles and factors that constitute the Purans to Vyas' (Brahma-Vaivarta Puran, Prakrit Khand, 5/123-124).

This establishes that Valmiki was a teacher of Purans as well, besides being the classifier of Vedas in the 24th four-Yug cycle.

The reason for the **differences between the various versions of Valmiki's life** in the Purans must be properly understood—

(a) Purans are mythological histories, narrating events that happened in different planes of time called 'Kalpas', which is approximately 432 x 10^7 years of mankind on earth and only count

for one day of Brahma, the creator. Since such a long period of time is involved in human terms, there is no wonder that the variations find their place in different versions.

(b) The main objects of the Purans, which are also called ‘Dharma Shastras’, is to elucidate the principles of the Vedas and Upanishads in a more charming form by weaving a parable or a story around the main metaphysical, theological or spiritual theme. They try to explain the principles by the familiar story telling pattern. They expound upon Brahm and other elements of religion and metaphysics, but since the medium chosen by the Purans is the story, therefore it is not necessary that they stick to the actual happenings to make them ‘perfect’ histories. They do go out of their way to make the story more charming and alluring for the listener and the reader. The dichotomy appears because the narrator lays more emphasis on one aspect of metaphysics, theology or spiritualism than the other aspect.

(c) For the purpose of story telling, ornamental language is often used to beautify the composition and make it more colourful and vibrant. But when debated in pure grammatical terms and analysed in more orthodox terms, different interpretations appear for a seemingly harmless word used by the narrator or composer of the Puran as the substitute for the actual word which he ought to have used to describe a particular event and its characters, and the way that word is used in the present time. This he does just to add flavour to his composition and not to purposely twist the fact.

(d) A single person has many aliases or nicknames. He might also use a pseudonym to hide his identity. This is a practice practiced even today by authors. This also creates confusion. That is why Valmiki is known by so many names.

(e) Adaptation according to the culture and tradition of the country over the ages and also due to geographical separation — though the main theme and characters remain more or less the same, the way their names are spelled and pronounced, the way they behave and interact, their moral standards, the details of the story —all of them may vary from one country to another, and from one era to another. This is most evident in the case of Ramayan, where

different countries where the story took its roots had its own interpretation of it and produced its own version of the epic having names of characters which had the influence of the local dialect, and the texture of the story also underwent changes according to the local customs and standards.

(l) Rig Veda, 10th Mandal (division) 99th Sukta (hymn) has 12 Mantras (Richas, divine Slokas). **Sage Valmiki is also said to be the ‘seer’ of this Sukta**, or the sage who had first conceptualised these mantras in his mind, who visualised and conceived them first, because its introductory part says— ‘the seer of this Mantra is Vabhro Vaikhanas’ (**कं नो वभ्रों वैखानसः, ऋग्वेद, १०/९९**). The word ‘Vabhro’ means an anthill or Valmik in Sanskrit, and the word ‘Vaikhanas’ means a forest dwelling hermit. Hence, ‘the forest dwelling hermit known as Vabhro, or one who had anthill around him, is the creator of these hymns of the Rig Veda’ (Rig Veda, 10/99). A separate appendix no. 2 gives the entire Sukta with its meaning.

It is quiet logical and natural to say that part of the Rig Veda has been conceptualised by sage Valmiki as Vibhro, who had also classified the rest of the composite text of the unclassified Vedas into 4 parts, known as Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva.

(m) There is also a belief that **Valmiki was a manifestation of the creator Brahma** who had taken his form in order to describe the great epic story of Sri Ram which the creator has conceived in his heart but thought it proper to divulge it for the larger good of the subjects of his creation. This fact is also mentioned in Adbhut Ramayan, Canto 27, verse no. 20, 22. The great Sanskrit scholar Sri Nagesh Bhatt, in his commentary on the epic Ramayan written in the 17 century AD (approximate 400 years ago; see serial no. f above) has said, while introducing Valmiki— ‘Lord Praacheta Valmiki is a fractional manifestation of Brahm, the creator. He (Valmiki) first created the Ramayan of the hundreds of thousands of verses, but decided to present an abridged version for the welfare of all human kind’ (**ब्रह्मांशसम्भूत एव भगवान प्राचेतसो वाल्मीकिः स्वकृतशतकोटि रामायणसारभूतम**).

On other hand, Matsya Puran clearly endorses the views expressed in Adbhut Ramayan (canto 27, verse no. 20, 22) by

saying— 'वाल्मीकिना च यत् प्रोक्तं रामोपाख्यानमुत्तमम् । ब्रह्मणा चोदितं तच्च शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम् ।। आहृत्य नारदेनैव वाल्मीकाय निवेदितम् । (मत्स्य पुराण)'. This verse means 'the great and excellent narration of the episodes or events pertaining to the life of Sri Ram, were described by Valmiki. It was conceived by Brahma (the creator) and it extended to hundreds and thousands of Slokas (verses). He (Brahma) preached it to Narad and the latter most obligingly gave it to Valmiki (Matsya Puran)'.

Thus, Nagesh Bhatt's contention that Valmiki was a manifestation of Brahma to preach the divine story of Ramayan to the world, and Matsya Puran's as well as Adbhut Ramayan's versions that Brahma was the first one to create it leads us to deduce that Valmiki and Brahma are the same authorities as far as the creation of the epic is concerned. Out of all the Gods, it was Brahma who had created the Vedas and the Chandas which formed the basis upon which the words of the Vedic hymns were founded, because he was the most learned and scholarly of the plethora of Gods in the immortal world of heaven were the scriptures were first said to have been conceptualised. Similarly, composing the twin epics (Ramayan and Adbhut Ramayan) required no lesser skills than that required to compose the Vedas; in fact, ancient scholars have labelled Ramayan as the '5th Veda', and therefore Valmiki, who conceived and composed it, was no less than Brahma in importance and stature. We must note that 'Brahma' is a 'title of honour and a designation' given to the creator of the world because he did it on behalf of Brahm, the supreme, transcendental and final authority of this creation who had no form. Brahma was Brahm's first manifestation as a male creator and Prajapati, while Mother Nature was Brahm's female counterpart.

Similarly, 'Valmiki' is a title or name given to a person who had emerged from an anthill and who was completely transformed from a wicked man to an erudite and wise scholarly sage. Even as Brahma got his name from Brahm, Valmiki derived his name from Valmik, meaning an anthill. Even as Brahma created the Vedas, Valmiki created their counterpart as Ramayan. And since Ramayan is said to be created by either of these two authorities, Brahma and Valmiki, and no one else, it follows that these two gentlemen were

the same person, may be not in pure physical terms as we humans generally understand the term to mean, but technically, genetically they were the same authority. Further, it has been repeatedly emphasised, even in the present book 'Adbhut Ramayan' in its last canto 27, that the story was first conceptualised in the mind and heart of Brahma, and it was narrated by Valmiki for the benefit of human kind on this earth, it also goes on to show that they were linked to each other.

So if the epic Ramayan is honoured with the title of being the 5th Veda meant for the common man as opposed to the other 4 Vedas meant for scholarly persons such as the Brahmins, there is no wonder in it, because even the lowest man in the social hierarchy had a right to get deliverance and emancipation, and the story pattern was more acceptable to a layman than dry philosophical discourses of the Vedas and Upanishads which were beyond his intellectual reach. Valmiki was Brahma in human form in as much as he showed them the path of salvation and emancipation by narrating the essence of the Vedas and Upanishads in the form of Ramayan which is one treatise that epitomises all the exemplary virtues which the Vedas and Upanishads stood for, propounded, expounded upon, hailed and exemplified. The story of Ramayan weaved in its texture as its integral part the great philosophies of the Vedas, Upanishads and other schools of thought such as Sankhya Shastra, Yog Darshan etc..

Caste of Valmiki:- Sri Ram has addressed Valmiki by the words 'Brahmin' in the epic Ramayan, Uttar Kand, canto 97, verse no. 1, 4.

प्रत्ययस्तु मम 'ब्रह्मं' स्तव वाक्यैरकल्मषैः । (१)
सेयं लोकभयाद् 'ब्रह्मन्' अपापेत्यभिजानता ।। (४)

(रामायाण, उत्तरकाण्ड, सर्ग ९७)

Sri Ram has clearly used the word 'Brahmin' to address Valmiki. Further, a person's birth is irrelevant to his life. For example, Ravana was Brahmin by birth and caste, but he was meat eating, cruel and a merciless demon. So his deeds were never in conformation to his birth as a Brahmin, and therefore it was not a sin for a Kshatriya king Sri Ram to kill a Brahmin Ravana whose

life and deeds made him worse than a Shudra, a low caste sinful man. On the contrary, Sabari, the old outcaste woman, and Nishad, the head boatman, were both born in low castes, but they were honoured by Sri Ram himself— he ate out of the hands of Sabari and performed her last rites as if she was his own mother, and he embraced Nishad, the tribal boatman.

Again, the fact that Valmiki was revered and honoured for his wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and scholarship which are the hallmarks of a true Brahmin whose main function is to teach others is highlighted in Padma Puran, Patal Khand, 66/12 as follows—

वेदान् सांगानहं सर्वान् ग्राह्यामास भूपते ।

(पद्मपुराण, पाताल खण्ड, ६६/१२)

'I have taught the king's (Sri Ram) son (Luv and Kush) grammar alongside the Vedas'. Since Vedas should and could be preached only by most scholarly persons, Valmiki was a Brahmin by profession and vocation.

Padma Puran, Patal Khand, 66/144 says—

एकदागतवान् 'विप्रो' वाल्मीकिर्विपिनं महत् ।
यत्र तालास्तमालाश्च किंशुका यत्र पुष्पिताः ।।

(पद्मपुराण, पाताल खण्ड, ६६/१४४)

'Once, the Brahmin (विप्रो—Vipro) Valmiki went to that great forest where trees called Tal (coconut), Tamal (black catechu plant), and Palash (the tree butea frondosa) were laden with blooming flowers'. These words of Vyas (Krishna Dwepayan Vyas, who was the composer of this Puran), clearly endorses the fact that Valmiki, his predecessor, was a Brahmin.

Different names of Valmiki—

(1) ऋक्षोऽभूद भार्गवस्तस्माद् वाल्मीकिर्योऽभिधीयते......

(Vishnu Puran, 3/3/18)

(2) ... 'ऋक्षो व्यासी भविष्यति'

(Vayu Puran, 33/164)

(3) ऽतृप्तस्तं मुनिं वन्दे प्राचेतसमकल्मषम् ।
वेदः प्राचेतसादासीत् साक्षात् रामायणात्मना ।।
एवमुक्तो भरद्वाजो वाल्मीकेन महात्मना ।

(Ramayan, 1/2/7)

(4) पुरा नारायणश्चेमां वाल्मीकाय कृपानिधिः ।

(Brahm Vaivarta Puran, Prakriti Khand, 4/53)

(5) पठनाद् धारणाद् वाग्मीकवीन्द्रो वल्मिको मुनिः ।

(Brahm Vaivarta Puran, Prakriti Khand, 4/66)

The various names of sage Valmiki, as they appear in the above citations from different Purnas and Valmiki's own Ramayan, are—(a) Riksha (ऋक्ष), (b) Praachetas or Prachetas (प्राचेतास), (c) Bhargav (भार्गव), (d) Valmiki (वाल्मीकि), (e) Valmik or Valmeek (वाल्मीक), (f) Vabhra (वभ्र), (g) Chyawan or Chyavan (च्यवन), (h) Chyawani (च्यवनी). Out of these, the most popular name is 'Valmiki' followed by Prachetas and Bhargav.

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Appendix no. 2
Valmiki's Rig Veda Sukta

कं नश्चित्रमिष्यसि चिकित्त्वान् पृथुग्मानं वाश्रं वावृधध्यै ।
कत्तस्य दातु शबसो व्युष्टौ तक्षद् वज्रं वृत्रतुरमपिन्बत् ।।१।।
स हिद्युता विद्युता वेति साम पृथुं योनिमसुरत्त्वा ससाद ।
स सनीलेभिः प्रसहानो अस्य भ्रातुर्न ऋते सप्तथस्य मायाः ।।२।।
स वाजं यातापदुष्पदा यन्त्स्वर्षाता परिषदत् सनिष्यन् ।
अनर्वा यच्छतदुरस्य वेदो घ्नञ्छिश्नदेवाँ अभि वर्पसा भूत् ।।३।।
स यह्व्योऽवनीर्गोष्ववर्वा जुहोति प्रघन्यासु सस्रिः ।
अपादो यत्र युज्यासोऽरथा द्रोण्यश्वास ईरते घृतं वाः ।।४।।
स रुद्रेभिराशस्तवार ऋभ्याहित्त्वी गयमारे अवध आगात् ।
वभ्रस्य मन्ये मिथुना विवव्री अन्नमभीत्यारोदयन्मुषायन् ।।५।।
स इद्दास तुवीरवं पतिर्वन्षलक्षं त्रिशीर्षाणं दमन्यत ।
अस्यत्रितो न्वोजसा वृधानो विपा वराहमयो अग्रया हन् ।।६।।
स द्रह्वणे मनुष ऊर्ध्वसान आसाविषदर्शसानाय शरुम् ।
स नृतमो नहुषोऽस्मत् सुजातः पुरोऽभिनदर्हन् वस्युहत्ये ।।७।।
सो अभ्रियो न यवस उदन्यन् क्षयाय गातुं विदन्नो अस्मे ।
उप यत्सीददिन्दुं शरीरैः श्येनोऽयोपाष्टिर्हन्ति दस्यून् ।।८।।
स व्राधतः शवसानेभिरस्य कुत्साय शुष्णं कृपणे परादात् ।
अयं कविसनयच्छस्यमानमत्कं यो अस्य सनितोत नृणाम् ।।९।।
अयं दशस्यन्नर्येभिरस्य दस्मो देवेभिर्बरणो न मायी ।
अयं कनीन ऋतुपा अवेद्यमिमीताररुं यश्चतुष्पात् ।।१०।।
अस्य स्तोमेभिरौशिज ऋजिश्वा व्रजं दरयद् वृषभेण पिप्रोः ।
सुत्त्वा यद् यजतो दीदयद्गीः पुर इयानो अभि वर्पसाभूत् ।।११।।
एवा महो असुर वक्षथाय वभ्रकः पड्भिरूपसर्पदिन्द्रम ।
स इयानः करति स्वस्तिमस्मा इषमूर्ज सुक्षितिं विश्वमाभाः ।।१२।।

(ऋग्वेद, १०वां मण्डल, सुक्त ९९)

Vishnu Puran, Chapter 3, verse no. 11-21 states that there are 29 erudite and enlightened scholars who had classified the composite undivided text of the Vedas into their present 4 parts—the Rig, Sam, Yajur and Atharva. These people were called 'Vyas' because they preached the Vedas, they were the exponents of

the Vedas and they expounded and explicitly elaborated upon the text. A full list of these 29 Vyases is given in appendix no. 1. Valmiki was the 24th in the line, and his alias was 'Riksha' (ऋक्ष). The relevant citation to establish this fact has also been given in that appendix.

Being an unmatched and preeminent enlightened scholar of repute, he was also one of the sages or seers who conceptualised certain hymns of the Rig Veda, the first of the 4 Vedas. The 99th Sukta (hymn) of the 10th division of Rig Veda, which are dedicated to Indra, the king of Gods and the most lauded God in this particular section of the Veda, are composed by Valmiki known with an alias 'Vabhra'. In the Anukramanika, the index, of this 10th division of the Rig Veda which tells us about the seer who composed a particular Sukta, the patron God to whom that particular Sukta is dedicated etc., it is clearly stated about the 99th Sukta—... 'The forest dwelling sage/seer (called Vaikhanas— वैखानस) who pronounced it was Vabhra (वभ्र)' derived from the word Vabhri (वभ्री) meaning an anthill, which in turn is another word for 'Valmik'. Verse no. 5 and 12 of this particular Sukta clearly states that it is composed by a person named Vabhra which is another name for Valmiki. The entire Sukta is given above in this appendix.

Further, Valmiki had also composed the Purans in his capacity as the 24th Veda Vyas as described in detail with relevant citations in appendix no. 1. There is no wonder then that a man who is so wise and so scholarly as to classify the Vedas, compile the Upanishads and pen the vast Purans, will also be competent and scholarly, wise and erudite as well as enlightened enough to compose at least some of the hymns of a particular Veda. It is well established that the Vedas are not a single person's copyright creation; they have been composed by a long train of sages and seers whose names have been clearly mentioned in the Anukramanika (index) appearing in each of the division of the Veda.

So, Valmiki, alias Vabhra, composed the above Sukta of the Rig Veda dedicated to Indra. It consists of 12 verses as follows—

(i) Oh Indra who understands our needs. Which praiseworthy, honorable wealth in abundance do you plan to send to us for the enhancement of our wellbeing and comfort? What charity will be left for us if Indra's Vritasur weapon (the weapon of Indra, called Bajra or Vritasur because it is with it that he had killed the demon Vritasur), sharpened and made potential (i.e., blessed) by the creator Brahma, loses its strength, powers, ability and vitality? [That is, if Indra, the king of Gods and vanquisher of the demon Vritasur, loses his sway and control over other Gods and demons, and his potentials to control, protect or vanquish them gets diminished, what will happen to us righteous creatures who depend on the Gods, instead of the demons, for our protection and sustenance.]

(ii) That Indra arrives near the Sam Veda which is sung during a fire sacrifice, holding the dazzling weapon called 'thunderbolt' or a ray of electric (Bajra). With all his might, he presents himself in those sacrifices which bestow great benefits or rewards to those who do them. He takes along the Maruts (the various Wind-Gods) riding on planes to attack the enemy. He is the 7th brother amongst the sun-brothers called Adityas, of whom Dhata (धाता —the creator, progenitor, preserver, sustainer and protector of creation; either Vishnu as Viraat or Brahma the patriarch; one of the 12 Suns) and Vidhata (विधाता —the one who decides destiny, lays down the laws which govern the working of the world) are the two brothers. Such sacrifices in which Indra is present are not affected by the Satanic or devilish forces which try to intervene and disrupt the fire sacrifice (or any righteous and virtuous endeavour).

[Note :- (a) The word 'Indra' comes from the seed or root word 'Indri' meaning 'the sense organs of a creature, such as the eyes, years, nose, tongue and skin'. Each has its own patron God. The Pran (vital breath) is the Lord of Gods; it is like Indra. Indra is the king of Gods, hence he is worshipped and his blessings sought so that the wise creature can keep all his senses under control and inclined towards righteousness instead of unrighteousness. The various 'Vrittis' of a man,

i.e., his inherent tendencies, inclinations, desires and aspiration, decided whether 'godly' virtues are prominent in him or the 'Satanic' or devilish ones have the upper hand. Since the creature has to live in a world it cannot be completely isolated from its environment, but what is important is how he deals with it, how he tackles the circumstances and the world. This is where the 'goodness or godliness' in him comes into play, as does the 'Satan or devil' in him. So ancient sages/seers hoped that the good virtues would prevail upon the bad ones. These Suktas or prayers are basically telling oneself that one should be righteous, virtuous and good; one should honour and laud righteousness, virtuousness and good deeds. The various fire sacrifices were the means to keep the righteous energies activated and proclaim to the world of evil and pervert tendencies that the 'fire of righteousness' is burning fiercely to annihilate all evil, sin, perversion and all sorts of demeaning forces present in the world at large. An example of how fire can scare off evil forces is clear when people light a fire in the jungle to scare away wild animals during the night when a group of people is camping in the forest.

(b) The Rig Veda is essentially a compendium of the different prayers or hymns called Suktas offered to pay homage to different Gods who represent different virtues and preside over different functions of the creature. Since Indra is the chief God, most of the Suktas of the Rig Veda are in his honour. Therefore, whereas Rig Veda is a term used for the Richas in a general manner, those composed by a particular seer in honour of a particular God were called Suktas. The fire sacrifices, though they involved physical rituals, had a subtle meaning to them, and that was to seek the blessings of these Gods who were supposed to preside over some specific function of creation. For example, if there was a drought, the rain God was invoked, and the Richas or Suktas dedicated to that God were used while performing the fire sacrifice. It was not that mere incantations of Mantras would bring down rain, but it was the science behind the whole

process that actually produced the rain by setting a conducive environment that was favourable for precipitation of rain—the various herbs used, their fumes, the sound energy generated from incantations, the self confidence created by such exercises which acted as morale boosters to help people tide over difficulties and work harder for successes in the belief that some great divine force is backing them.

(c) The 12 Adityas— These are the legendary Suns; they are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods. They are 8 Vasus + Indra + Vishnu + Shiva + the celestial Sun (Rig Veda, 1/41/4-6; 2/27). According to Taiteriya Brahmin, 1/1/9/1, there are only 8 Adityas— (i) Mitra, (ii) Varun, (iii) Aryaman, (iv) Anash (v) Bhag or Brahma (Vidhata), (vi) Dhata (Vishnu), (vii) Indra (the king of Gods), and (viii) Vivaswan Arun. According to Brihad Aranakya Upanishad, 3/9/5, these 12 Adityas represent the 12 months of the year.]

(iii) Proceeding to battle in a plane which cannot be brought down, he (Indra) approaches the site of battle with a desire and determination to win as trophy the wealth (dignity, honour and assets) of the enemy (i.e., to defeat the enemy). Indra, who does not turn his back in the battlefield, kills the guards of the enemy's city who are indulgent in self gratification of their organs (and therefore weak, inept and incapable of offering resistance and standing fast with a firm resolution in the face of an offensive launched by the enemy). Indra wins the treasures of the enemy (as spoils or trophy of war).

[Note :- This verse symbolises the victory of goodness over bad. It stressed that the sense organs which are allowed to be indulgent will never protect a man from the onslaught of his enemies. It invokes and prays to the patron God of good virtues to invade and trounce the evil and pervert forces that have dominated his inner-self which is compared to an enemy's city; the guards are metaphors for the sense organs of the body. Evil tendencies present in the bosom of a man are equivalent to an enemy residing in a city guarded by indulgent gatekeepers who becomes incompetent and impotent to guard it when under attack from a determined intruder.]

(iv) Indra, who resides upon the clouds, sprinkles (showers) rain upon this earth which produces immense amount and variety of wealth to sustain the creation. Upon this earth, the rivers, which are friendly to Indra (by helping him in his enterprise to collect that water poured by him and take it along to the fields to irrigate the land), move without legs and without a chariot, eternally and incessantly.

[Note :- In ancient time, agricultural was the sign for prosperity. Abundant rainfall was a sign of munificence and benevolence of the Gods. The symbolism is that when Indra is happy, when righteous and virtuousness are the predominant players in the world, there would be abundance of rainfall signifying the grace of Gods, and the rivers would be full of water signifying and endless supply of fortune to keep the earth green and the fields and meadows blooming with crop symbolising all-round wellbeing, prosperity, happiness, joy and abundance of material comfort for the creatures.]

(v) I request Indra, who gives wealth to seekers even without their expressly asking for it and who is sinless himself, to leave his exalted abode (called Indra Lok) and come down here (in my household in the terrestrial world) along with the various Maruts (the Wind-Gods). I think that if it so happens, the parents of the sage named Vabhra, who is none else but me, shall be freed from torments. He (Indra) snatches, or forcibly takes away, the food from the enemy and makes them weep (i.e., he punishes those who are evil by starving them and making them fast as a means of repentance for their sins and misdemeanours as well as a retribution for their sins).

[Note :- This verse clearly, decisively establishes that Vabhra, alias Valmiki, is the sage or seer who had composed this Sukta. See introduction to this appendix.]

(vi) The Lord of all (Indra) is the one who had killed him (a demon named Vritasur) who was tormenting and ruining the world and made a horrifying and terrifying noise in war (a bone chilling yell that sent shivers down the spine of his opponents and they ran away before fighting him). Besides this, he (Indra) had also slayed the son of Vashta, called Vishwarup, who had 3 heads and 6 eyes. It was upon his strength that a sage named Sambardhman Chitra

had sliced through the rain-bearing cloud with his fingers which had nails as strong as iron.

(vii) Possessing such grand virtues as valour and invincibility, the same Indra provides his warrior devotee, who is challenged by his opponents, potent and powerful weapons to enable the devotee to destroy his enemies. He (Indra) is the one who injects courage, strength, valour and stamina in human beings and prepares them as well as inspires them to enter into battle fearlessly. That honourable Indra has appeared for us (has intervened on our behalf) in a merciless war that is fatal for the enemy, to pierce his sensitive body parts (i.e., spike our enemy in his chest; to stab him or impale him to death with his thunderbolt).

[Note :- This verse invokes Indra to protect the population against invaders. It also instills a sense of fearlessness in the warrior who is heading for war with a confidence building exercise that makes him feel assured of some divine force protecting him and ensuring his victory over the enemy in the ensuing battle. In ancient times, the kings performed fire sacrifices before waging wars; perhaps this verse refers to that practice. It helped to jack-up the morale and confidence of the king and his army, which ultimately lead to their victory. Verse no. 3, 8-10 also have the same tone.]

(viii) He is magnanimous and benevolent like the clouds which are eager to provide grass (fodder) and water (rain) to the cows (or all other domestic and pet animals). He also shows them (the cows and other animals) the way to our homes (i.e., he directs the cattle to their sheds at the end of the day when the animals return home after grazing for the day). When that Indra, in his different forms, reaches the vicinity of the moon, he wears an iron body armour and slays all the enemies like a hawk swooping down on its prey.

(ix) Let that Indra get rid of our great enemies with his powerful and strong weapon (called Bajra or thunderbolt). He had killed a demon named Sushna on behalf of sage Kutsa who worshipped and prayed to Indra. He also made the enemies of a poet (sage Bhargav), who used to sing prayers in Indra's honour, subservient and obedient to the poet (i.e., the enemies of Bhargav

who were jealous of him were made to capitulate before the sage and show respect to him). This poet used to worship the Maruts (Wind-Gods), who inspired the clouds and were assistants of Indra, with equal devotion and fervour.

[Note :- The Maruts are the Wind-Gods. The clouds move in the sky because of wind forces. Indra is the Lord of rain, and without clouds, there can be no rain. That is why, the Maruts and Indra always stay together. The Wind-Gods are assistants to Indra as they help him to direct the clouds to the required place where Indra wants rainfall.]

(x) A provider of wealth and prosperity to those who sing hymns in his glory and honour, Indra, in association with the Maruts who are well wishers of humans, pierces (penetrates or spikes or impales) the enemies (to kill them). He appears very charming to behold with his magnificent form. He is as maverick, illusive, artful and crafty as Varun (the Water-God). Indra, who has most charming and bewitching form and countenance, is considered the protector of the world in all the seasons. He had killed a demon named Araru who had 4 legs.

(xi) When sage Rijishwa (ऋजिश्वा), the son of Ushij (उशिज्), most fervently prayed and invoked Indra during the religious sacrifice called Somyagya (सोमयज्ञ), and having being blessed by Indra in this form (i.e., Indra having the potentials lauded in this Sukta), when he attacked the city of his enemies, it was on the strength and potentials powers of these Stotras (hymns) sung in the honour of Indra that he could dismantle and break the shed holding the bulls and other such domestic animals of the demon named Pipro (पिप्रो), i.e., he was able to defeat his enemy, the demon, and conquer him and usurp his assets.

[Note :- Somyagya is a religious sacrifice held every 3 years in which a sanctified liquid called 'Som' is drunk. This liquid is deemed to possess divine qualities that can help to fulfill the desires of the drinker.]

(xii) Oh powerful Indra! This sage (that is, me) named Vabhrak (वभ्रक) or Valmiki hopes to acquire worldly as well as out-worldly happiness, comfort, prosperity and all round wellbeing with

the help of the blessing of this Stotra (devotional hymns) sung in your honour. He (me) has walked (come) to you with this specific purpose. Oh Indra to whom a petitioner (my self) has come with an earnest plea! You must protect me, secure me. Please arrange for sufficient food grains (eatables), juices (water and other drinkables) and home (a house or any dwelling place which is peaceful and comfortable) for me (or for all of us).

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Appendix no. 3
Metaphysical concepts appearing in the text

Atma and the five sheath/veils surrounding it :-This is the pure-self, the pure consciousness which is a microscopic reflection of the vast macrocosmic Soul of the cosmos called Brahm. The Atma provides life or consciousness to the inert layers of matter consisting of the 5 elements of air, water, space, fire and earth which crystalise to form the five coverings or sheaths around the pure Atma, and together (the Atma and the five sheaths) they create what we call the 'living being', whether plant, animal or humans.

The Panch Kosha :- Or the five sheaths covering or enveloping the Atma are as follows—(i) The food sheath; (ii) the vital air sheath; (iii) the mental sheath; (iv) the intellectual sheath; (v) and the bliss sheath.

The Food Sheath :- Is the physical body and derives its name because it is nourished by the food eaten by the creature. It consists of 5 organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin) and 5 organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, genitals, anus).

The Vital Air Sheath :- Is the five-fold faculties of perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching), excretion (faeces, urine, sperm, sputum, sweat etc.), digestion (stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas, gall bladder, appendix), circulation (blood stream, artery, vein, capillary, heart) and thinking (the power to entertain, absorb and assimilate new information and thought).

The Mental Sheath :- It consists of the equipment which receives external stimuli through the sense organs and links it to the organs of action. Integrated response of body to the stimuli is done through the mind sheath. It is a continuous flow of thoughts. Because the mind is characterised by being in a state of flux, the mind (mental sheath), which is like a clerk, receives information (as stimuli) from the organs of perception and dispatches them to either the organs of action or the intellect when certain situations demand intelligent thinking and discrimination. Therefore, the mental sheath controls the vital air sheath and the food sheath.

The Intellect Sheath :- It acts as a controlling mecha-

nism over the mind; It regulates, filters and modifies the response to the various stimuli. It has the discriminatory power which the mind, left alone to itself, lacks.

The intellect sheath is the chief of the whole setup—in fact it controls the mind sheath, and through it, the functioning of the creature. It is the task master that directs the reckless horde of school boys running amok hither and thither, as it were. Those boys who obey this teacher become civilised and educated while the rest of the bunch remain buffoons or ruffians. The intellect can distinguish between the good and the bad, which the mental sheath cannot. The intellect can see beyond the realm of the known while the mind cannot. The intellect sheath is the spring board for all ideas and ideologies. The intellect helps to stabilise and channelise the mind even as the dam controls the river and harnesses its immense energy to produce powerful electricity.

These two sheaths—the mind and the intellect—are called the subtle sheaths or bodies. They have no physical structure in conventional terms like the gross or physical body called the food sheath or Anna Maya Kosh (consisting of the organs of perception and organs of action) as well as the air sheath (called the Pran Maya Kosh) of the creature. This subtle sheath has only functional aspect. The mental and intellect sheaths are like softwares of a computer vis-a-vis the food and vital sheaths which resemble the hardware paraphernalia of the entire system.

The Bliss Sheath :- Is the innermost sheath surrounding the Atma/the soul. It consists of 'inherent tendencies' or 'Vasanas' and 'Vrittis' before they are manifested into thoughts or actions. The intellect, mind etc. perform under the guidance and control of the bliss sheath. It is so-called because an individual experiences relative bliss, happiness, joy, contentedness, peace and tranquility when he is associated with it.

In the waking and dream states, a man experiences constant agitation of the mind, but once he reaches the realm of deep sleep state (bliss sheaths), he feels undisturbed, tranquil, peaceful and full of bliss. All agitations cease here. It is a relative experience

vis-a-vis the other sheaths. This sheath is also called the Causal Body of the creature.

The 5 sheaths are all inane, inert, inactive and constitute of matter. This together form the personality of the Jiva. He is conscious of all that his happening around him but these 5 sheaths are inert themselves. So, naturally, there must be something distinct and separate from these sheaths that lends the Jiva the so-called life or consciousness. That factor which lends life or consciousness to the Jiva is called Atma, pure consciousness or the pure self of the creature. It is also the true identity or self of the Jiva.

		Deep sleeper	⇔	Causal body		
Jiva's	→	Dreamer	⇔	Subtle Body	←	Atma
Personality		Waker	⇔	Gross Body		

Diagram showing interaction between the Jiva and the Atma.

The States of Existence :- The Atma (soul) has 4 states of existence in a creature —the waking state, the dream state, the deep sleep state and the Turiya state of existence or consciousness. During the 'waking state', the Atma acts through the gross body (the physical body) of a man in its interaction with the outside world. During the 'dream state of existence', the Atma withdraws from the gross body and limits its interaction to the subtle body (the mind-intellect complex). During the 'deep sleep state of existence', the Atma withdraws itself into the causal body consisting of 'Vasanas' (inherent passions and desires) and 'Vrittis' (inherent tendencies and inclinations). But the pure consciousness, when it plunges within itself, that is, inside the causal body called the bliss sheath, it attains absolute bliss. This is called the 4th state called 'Turiya state of existence', and it is obtained by ascetics during Samadhi (a trance like state) when all the 3 sheaths covering the soul —food/air, mind/intellect and bliss —are removed. With the removal of these various sheaths, the Atma/soul of the individual (which is pure microcosmic consciousness) merges itself with the vast space around it (called the macrocosmic consciousness) because all separating sheaths have been done away with.

To explain the above concept, we may take the help of dia-

gram and illustration:—

Man = Pure consciousness or Atma + Causal body (Vasanas) + Subtle body (mind-intellect) + Gross body (sense organs)

The body-mind-intellect are inane and inert. The live factor is the pure consciousness or Atma. This pure consciousness functions through its association with the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body, or in other words, the deep sleeper, the dreamer and the waker state of consciousness.

	Body (Consisting of)		Called the	
	Gross body (sense organs)	⇔	Waker	
Man →	Subtle body (mind-intellect)	⇔	Dreamer	←Atma (pureconsciousness)
	Causal body (Vasanas)	⇔	Deep sleeper	

This combination of 'waker-dreamer-deep sleeper' states of consciousness of a man is called Microcosm. The pure consciousness has its independent existence from the above 3 states, and this independence is called the 4th state of consciousness called the 'Turiya state' or the blissful state of consciousness (चिदानन्द) which has the bliss sheath as its external boundary.

According to Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, the Atma residing in the heart of the creature is in an 8-petal lotus. The tendrils (केसर) of this lotus described in this Upanishad represent the waking state of consciousness, the stalk (कर्णिका) represents the dream state of conscious, and the thalamus (लिंग) represents the deep sleep state of consciousness. When a creature abandons/discards the metaphoric habitat or dwelling in the 8-petal lotus represents by his heart and rises above its precincts (just like a householder snapping all his relationships with his home and takes to the path of Vanprastha), it obtains the forth state of consciousness called the 'Turiya state'. Eventually, when the creature, in the form of his subtle Atma (which according to the definition given to it by the Upanishad, inter alia, is 'Hans' which means a 'Swan' and is a metaphor for divinity, purity and wisdom) merges with or dissolves in the cosmic 'Naad' (all-pervading subtle sound in the cosmos), then the final or the so-called 'Turiyateet' stage is achieved (verse no. 8).

The **brain** has 2 components —the intellect and the mind.

The former is under the direct control of the Atma while the mind is subordinate to the intellect. The mind receives worldly stimuli through the sense organs, passes them to the intellect, obtains instructions from the intellect and passes them on to the organs of action —this state prevails when the man is 'awake'.

Now, when he is asleep, there are two stages —either he dreams or he does not. During the 'dreams state', the inherent Vasanas (the hidden passions, yearning and desires) come into play at the sub conscious level and the mind lives up to all those Vasanas in an imaginary world. But when there is no dream, i.e., during the 'deep sleep state' of consciousness, the Atma is freed from interference and it reverts back to its original form of being 'nothingness, having no feelings and no emotions', just like the case wherein the mirror is removed from the front of a man and his image vanishes from it and the image reverts back into its primary source or object, which in this case is the man himself whose image was formed in the mirror. The Atma is an image of the supreme Brahm. When the mirror of the mind-intellect is removed, it (Atma) reverts back into its primary form which is Brahm. So, it is the 'deep sleep state of consciousness' in which the creature comes in direct contact of his true identity or true self, which is called Atma or pure consciousness.

For the external world, a sleeping man is as good as being dead. For example, if a sleeping man is attacked by someone, he won't resist; he won't even know what has happened just in front of him while he was asleep. He is not dead, but for all practical purposes 'he is as good as dead'. He neither feels pain nor happiness when in a deep sleep state of existence, which is beyond the dream state of sleep. The 'deep sleep state' is called 'Swaprant' (स्वप्रान्त) —literally meaning 'in a state of suspended animation, or a self-imposed state of coma, or a state of being virtually dead, or coming to a stage voluntarily which is almost like being dead but is not actual death'.

This **Microcosm** is the same as the **Macrocosm** in the larger scheme or scale of things, just like a single molecule of water with the formulae H_20 is the same whether in a cup or spoon and

the vast, fathomless ocean. Here, the microcosm refers to the individual creature/Jiva/man and the macrocosm refers to the Viraat/ Lord God/Nature.

Now, as has been explained in the foregoing discussion, it is relatively easy to control the subtle and the gross bodies through acquisition of truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. The greatest problem arises with the causal body consisting of Vrittis and Vasanas (passions and desires; inherent tendencies and inclinations). This can be solved by integrating the objective mind (the 'mind') and the subjective mind (the 'intellect'). When both are integrated, then the creature reacts in a healthy manner. When actions are controlled by the wisened intellect, the inherent tendencies of the creature fail to exert their influence on it and they gradually vanish (i.e., removed or catherised). This results in the seeker merging his Microcosm with the Macrocosm.

According to Upanishadic sages/seers, 'Life' can be understood to be a series of experiences and that any definition of life should necessarily accept our moment-to-moment experiences as the units of life. The sages/seers further understood that an experience is not possible without three fundamental factors—the experiencer, the object of experience, and the relationship between the two, the experiencing. The experiencer is the subject who gains experiences of the world through the instruments of experience, namely, the body, mind, and intellect. Everyone gains experiences of three different worlds through these three different equipments viz.— through the body, the world of objects; through the mind, the world of feelings; and through the intellect, the world of ideas.

If a person experiences the world of objects through his body, then he should be different from his body. If he experiences the world of feelings through his mind, then he, the experiencer, cannot be the mind. Again, if he gains experiences of the world of ideas through the intellect, he cannot be the intellect. He seems to be a different factor or entity altogether from these three instruments of experiences, though, of course, he has a very intimate relationship with them.

When the subject is identified with the intellect, he becomes the 'thinker', experiencing the world of ideas; when identified with the mind, he becomes the 'feeler' experiencing the world of emotions; and when identified with the body, he becomes the 'perceiver' experiencing the world of objects. But he, the subject, is neither the field of experience nor the instruments of experience. He must be totally different from them both.

The effect that ego and desires (Ahankar and Kaam) as well as Vasanas and Vrittis (inherent desires and tendencies) have on the mind, how they corrupt the objective mind and how their removal/catherisation purifies the mind and brings it under the direct control of the subjective mind (the intellect) of the creature is explained with the help of a diagram at the end of this appendix.

The **relationship between microcosm and macrocosm** varies according to the individual personality of the man. The grossest man with the maximum load of Vasanas and Vrittis imagines a wide chasm/gulf between the microcosm and the macrocosm. As the individual cleanses or purges himself of these inherent tendencies, this blending increases, and when it vanishes altogether, the distinction between the two also vanishes i.e., there is oneness between the microcosmic soul (creature's Atma) and the macrocosmic soul (Parmatma).

According to the theory of Vedant, the Lord has two forms– Macrocosmic and Microcosmic. The macrocosmic form of the Lord is the Viraat which is huge, large, colossus, vast, gigantic, beyond all measurement. The microcosmic form of the Lord is the miniscule creature of this world. The gross body of the Lord vis-a-vis the gross body of the creature are clarified Diagrammatically below :—

Microcosmic (creature)	**Macrocosmic (Viraat Lord)**
(i) Individual gross body (food+vital-air sheath)	= Total of all gross bodies is called Viraat
(ii) Individual subtle body (the mind-intellect sheath)	= Total of the subtle bodies is called Hiranyagarbh
(iii) Individual causal body (bliss sheath)	= Total of causal bodies is called Eswar/Ishwar

This is the single creature	This is the sum total of all the creatures represented by the Lord.

Vrittis and Vasanas :- *'All human actions have one or more of these 7 causes —chance, nature, compulsion, habit, passion and desire'—Aristotle.*

'Do not ye yet understand that what so entereth the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those thing that proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart (and the mind); and they defile the man for out of the heart (and the mind) proceed evil thought, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness (lies), blasphemies. These are the thing that defile a man' (Bible, St. Matthew, 15/17-20).

The pure consciousness (Atma) is the core of a man's personality. It is infinite, pure, all-pervading, omniscient, enlightened, changeless and supreme truth/reality. However, its infinite nature is clouded by the various Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations) and Vasanas (desires and passion inherent in a man) resulting in the creation of a finite, limited, impure, corrupt, not fully enlightened, ever changing personality of the human being—such a person is called the 'perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer' entity. When the various Vrittis or Vasanas are eliminated or excluded (i.e., catharised), the attitude undergoes transformation and metamorphosis from a perceiver-feeler-thinker entity (corresponding to the gross body, the mind and intellect collectively called the subtle body) into simple pure consciousness which, in reality, is the true identity of the creature. Please see the diagram appended to this appendix for further clarification on this subject.

Man's real and truthful nature is pure consciousness but he passes through the 3 different, distinct, relative states of the waker, dreamer and deep sleeper states as a result of the interaction or play of consciousness in the Gross, the Subtle and the Causal bodies respectively. No sooner the identification of the pure consciousness with any one or more of these bodies is removed than his original, pure, natural form is unfolded. This state is called self-

realisation, or Godhood—or it is also called the state of supreme and sublime bliss, joy, happiness, peace and tranquility. Hence, when the pleural personality is removed, the real, singularly unique personality shines through.

It is the Atma which ignites/kindles/infuses life in the other 5 sheaths which are, left to themselves, inert and lifeless even as a piece of iron is lifeless without the infusion of life into it by a magnet held nearby. This magnet is separate/distinct from the iron but it invisibly gives life to the dead, gross and inert piece of iron. The iron is the 5 sheaths and the magnet is the Atma. Remove the Atma and the man is as lifeless as the piece of iron.

According to Hano-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, the Atma resides in the heart which is shaped like an 8-petal lotus. Each petal of this lotus symbolises one type of 'Vritti'. The petal facing to the east represents the righteous and noble inclinations; the petal facing south-east corner (Agneya) represents sleep, drowsiness, lethargy, inertia, and disinclination to work; the petal facing to the south direction represents cruel tendencies; the petal facing in the south-west angle (Yaniritya) represents the inclination of the mind to be sinful, unrighteous and pervert; the petal facing towards the west represents the desires for sports, action and play; that petal facing to the north-west direction (Vayapya) represents the desire to be on the move, to go, roam and wander; the petal in the north direction represents the affection of a creature for Brahm, its true self and its desires to endear it; the petal in the north-east direction represents the desires for charity; and the petals surrounding the thalamus represent the tendency to renounce, to be dispassionate and detached from the artificial, sensual world (verse no. 8).

There are 3 types of 'Vasanas' as follows— (i) The 'Vasanas' pertaining to the body relate to one's son, property and wealth which a person has acquired and enjoys, and the world around him —his relatives, his fame, his contacts, his friends, his obligation, contracts and responsibility. It also means gratification of the sense organs of the body as well as to appease those who are related to him with this body. (ii) The 'Vasanas' pertaining to the scriptures relate to studying them more and more, acquiring

scholarship, expertise and accompanying fame and money through them, relying too much on the letter of the scriptures and not their spirit, engrossing oneself in endless doubts and debates leading to confusions and contradictions. The scriptures are vast and like a fathomless sea. Trying to realise the Supreme Truth by delving into the depths of the scriptures is like extracting pearl by churning the ocean. Through it is theoretically possible, but practically it is impossible. (iii) The Vasanas relating to the world are the various attractions and allurements that his apparently enchanting and captivating world presents to a person. It also refer to the various and endless responsibilities and obligations, real and imaginary, that a person has, or imagines he has, towards this world.

The 3 Gunas :- The 3 characteristics inherent present in the creature are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the **Vrittis and Vasanas** (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its soul as a covering or veil.

The Satwic desire is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the 3 characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous, righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts etc..

The Rajsic desires can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed. It is the medium characteristic marked by ambitions, desires, passions, expansionist tendencies, desire to sustain etc..

The Tamsic desires covering the soul are like a foetus in the womb—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the base and most lowly of the 3 characteristics such as sin, evil, pervertness, immorality, vices, misdemeanours, anger, inertia et al.

The concept that 'I' is the body and not the 'pure conscious soul' leads to ignorance-based ego (Ahanakar = अहंकार).

The constant concept of I vis-a-vis the body and this world leads to the sense of possessiveness in the creature. 'Pure consciousness' mired by ego becomes 'a conditioned consciousness' and fails to remain pure. This is why ego (Ahankar) has been likened to a minister of the king. It directs and regulates the actions of the consciousness which, under its influence, loses its independence. This 'conditioned consciousness'—working through the mind-intellect-ego combine is called, inter-alia, 'Chitta' (चित्त). The word also means conscious memory. Hence this memory acts as a referral library for the intellect. The latter falls back on it and relies on it whenever it is in doubt. The quality of books in the library guides the student; similarly, the quality of inherent tendencies stored in the library of Chitta directly effects the inputs of the intellect, and through it, the mind and successively down the hierarchy to the body and its organs of perception and action.

Although the soul has nothing to do with this command chain (i.e., memory—inherent tendencies/ego/Vasanas—intellect—mind—body—action—result—more experience—stored in memory—and the chain continues), but for all practical purposes the Atma/soul is deemed responsible for it because of its sovereign nature.

So, the sincere seeker/aspirant should delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the soul to shine through like the splendorous sun breaking through from behind a curtain of clouds.

It is like removing the various veils or covers from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.

The proportion of the 3 Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvik' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajsic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvik' qualities in them. Kings and house-

holders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajsic' quality in them, while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man. A separate full page diagram depicts the relationship between these Gunas and the personality of a man.

Mental flux :- The 5 states of the mind are the following—(i) Kshipta (क्षिप्त), (ii) Mudh (मुद्ध), (iii) Vikshipta (विक्षिप्त), (iv) Ekagra (एकाग्र) and (v) Nirudha (निरुद्ध). The 'Kshipta' is the worst type of mind characterised by extreme recklessness and restlessness. It is susceptible to various negative traits such as confusion, conflicts, anger, anxiety, worry, tension, agitations of all kinds etc..

The 'Mudh' is the dull, inert and indolent state of mind. These first two states of mind are predominantly 'Tamas' in nature.

The 'Vikshipta' state is a 'distracted' state of mind in which it swings between the extremes of calmness and agitation. This is a 'Rajsic' quality.

The 'Ekagra' state is a focused or concentrated mind. It is a state in which the mind can keep alert and pin-pointed on any subject it is focusing upon. It helps to cultivate discipline in the aspirant.

The 'Nirudha' state is that state of mind in which there is no mental flux of any kind. It is a kind of trance like state of bliss and happiness. The last two states of mind are called 'Satvik' qualities of the creature.

The 5 Basic Elements and their Manifestations

(Based on Trishikhi Brahmano-panishad, 1/5)

A) Sky Element → (i) Antahakaran (discriminatory intellect and wisdom), (ii) Mana (mind), (iii) Buddhi (intelligence), (iv) Chitta (intellect, memory, recollection, concentration) and (v) Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness, hypocrisy, arrogance). Its colour is light blue. it extend uptil the top of the head.

(B) Wind Element→ (i) Samaan (the vital wind controlling equal distribution of nourishment and circulation), (ii) Udan (wind moving upwards; controls expectoration), (iii) Vyan (wind that pervades throughout the body; maintains equilibrium), (iv) Apaan (wind passing down the intestine; controls ingestion, digestion and excretion of food) and (v) Pran (breath). Its colour is grey and it resembles smoke or haze.

(C) Fire element → Orange of perception, such as— (i) ears, (ii) skin, (iii) eyes, (iv) tongue and (v) nose. Its colour is red like vermillion and its hapes is like tongues of flame.

(D) Water element→Senses of perception— (i) hearing, (ii) touch, (iii) sight, (iv) taste and (v) smell. Its colour is silvery white and it is shaped like the crescent moon.

(E) Earth element → Organs of action— (i) mouth, (ii) hands, (iii) legs, (iv) anus and (v) genitals. Its colour is light yellow and it has 4 corners.

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Appendix no. 4
Other Books by Author

This humble author has written several books with a missionary zeal as his humble service to his beloved Lord Sri Ram. A brief view is given below:-

These books are a 'book lover's dream come true' and stand out heads-over-shoulders in the realm of metaphysical, philosophical, devotional, spiritual and classical literature of India. Such as for example, there are Goswami Tulsidas' myriad works with Sri Ram as the central theme which are glittering like gems, poetically told, stupendous in beauty, marvelously narrated and contain a treasury of fathomless wisdom and deep insight into spiritualism, metaphysics and philosophy. Then there is Veda Vyas' glorious narration of the epic story of Sri Ram in Adhyatma Ramayan and Devi Puran Maha Bhagwat Ramayan. The Upanishads represent the epitome of Indian philosophical, metaphysical and spiritual treatises— the marvelous highest pinnacle that human thought can possibly reach. They are acclaimed the world over as highly evolved and intellectually enlightening books. The Vedas, on the other hand, are believed to be revealed books. The two form the two legs of Hinduism.

The author has presented a simple, day to day bilingual version (Hindi and English) of these stupendous texts. A huge array of information on Sri Ram and Hanuman culled from the Vedas, Upanishads. Purans, and myriad other sources have been systematically presented by the author in lucid, florid, easy flowing, vibrant and captivating English language— useful to a layman, a devotee, curious people, research scholars, causal as well as serious readers, plain book lovers or connoisseurs of classical literature. A must read for everyone.

All the books have original text with line-to-line easy flowing English version with necessary explanatory notes, appendices, etc. A brief introduction to the books is as follows : -

Full-scale version series on 108 Upanishads in English, together with Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan & Devi Puran Ramayan, and Valmiki's Adbhut Ramayan have been published by a reputed publisher of India. Details can be had by contacting the author by email given below.

The rest of his Books are in various stages of production.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

My Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

(a) (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
(b) (in 'paper-back book' version),
(c) (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) 24 Symbols, (iv) Kobo, (v) Page Foundry, (vi) Scribd, (vii) Tolino etc.:—

List of Books that are currently available on the above websites in digital formats as well as in printed-book format, and on the author's own website {www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com} in pdf format are the following:-

(A) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's

different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2.

(B) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- 'Dohawali'; (2) Book 2- 'Parvati Mangal'; (3) Book 3- 'Kavitawali'; (4) Book 4- 'Janki Mangal'; (5) Book 5- 'Ram Lala Nahachu'; (6) Book 6- 'Geetawali Ramayan'; (7) Book 7- 'Vairagya Sandipani'; (8) Book 8- 'Vinai Patrika'.

More books will be added as they get readied.

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